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Nick Carter Stories

A NEW SERPENT IN EDEN

or Nick Carter and the Burned Cab

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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A NEW SERPENT IN EDEN;

Or, NICK CARTER AND THE BURNED CAB.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A VERY PECULIAR LETTER.

Chick Carter, the great New York detective's leading assistant, found himself at Ocean Island, the popular summer resort near New York, on an uncommon errand, even for him, that night in early September.

His destination was The Garden of Eden—so called.

The amusement park which went by that name was by no means new to him or to Nick, nor had they previously found it to resemble the original to any noticeable extent.

Some time before, it, and one of the adjoining attractions, The Crystal Maze, which was under the same management as the Garden, had been the scene of a spectacular raid, which had resulted in the rescue of three girls, who had mysteriously disappeared at various times that summer.

Nick Carter, Chick, and his woman assistant, Ida Jones, had headed the rescue party, and had discovered the girls in a number of secret rooms at the top of the great tower which stood in one corner of the Garden inclosure.

As a result, it had developed that the chief owner of the two amusement places, Jules Legrand, had been preparing to open on the vaudeville stage with an elaborate hypnotic act, and had caused the girls to be spirited away in order to furnish him with likely subjects for his experiments.

His accomplices, including the managers of the two resorts, had been speedily convicted, but Legrand, somehow, managed to elude pursuit, and to drop completely out of sight.

There was good reason to believe that he had been in league with a certain Mrs. Byron West, a young widow from California, who had achieved quite a social success in New York, and had won the confidence of one of the girls whom Legrand kidnaped for his conscienceless hypnotic tests. Nothing had been proved, however.

Shortly after Legrand's hidden doings had been brought to light, and the man himself had apparently departed for parts unknown, the gay and dashing Mrs. West had gone to Asbury Park. Nick Carter had had no intention of losing sight of her if he could help it, for he hoped that some day he might be able to trace Legrand through her. Patsy Garvan, the detective's second assistant, was accordingly dispatched to the popular New Jersey resort to keep an eye on the widow.

He had done so with his accustomed thoroughness, but after a week or ten days had passed without result, Nick had been obliged to recall him to New York and assign more urgent work.

Subsequently, the detectives had learned that Mrs. West had shaken the sand of Asbury from her feet, but had not returned to her apartment in New York. Thus she, too, had vanished from the horizon.

Still later, they had got wind of the fact that Legrand's attractions at Ocean Island had changed hands. That information had seemed promising, for they could not believe at first that the negotiations could have been put through without requiring Legrand's presence, or, at least, without disclosing his whereabouts.

The new hope, thus awakened, had come to naught, however.

It was found that the enterprises in question were nominally owned by an incorporated concern known as the Sea Beach Resorts Company. Legrand had owned practically all of the stock issued by this company, and had, therefore, been able to manage it just as he pleased. When, in his enforced retirement, he had decided to sell out, he had, indeed, revealed himself—temporarily and to

a very limited degree—but not in such a way as to do Nick Carter any good.

Legrand had communicated with a firm of New York brokers, Spillman & Webster, with whom he had done business occasionally, and had notified them of his desire to dispose of his holdings. The brokers showed Nick this letter. It had evidently been written from, and was postmarked, Atlanta. With it, the detective was informed, had come the key of Legrand's box in the Gotham Safe Deposit Company's vaults, in which the stock certificate had been left. If they could make the sale, Spillman & Webster were instructed, and legally empowered, by means of the letter and the accompanying power of attorney, which was duly witnessed by an Atlanta notary, to remove the certificates from the vaults and turn them over to the purchaser.

As for the proceeds, they were being held by the brokers, subject to Legrand's call. Spillman & Webster declared that they had carried out their client's terms in a confidential manner, as business ethics required. They stated that the new owner of the resorts was a certain Miss Constance Chiswick, a Chicago woman of means, who had formerly been a circus performer abroad.

Nick thereupon sent Chick to Atlanta, and at the same time caused inquiries to be made in Chicago. Chick found that Legrand had covered his tracks skillfully in the Georgia city. He had evidently registered at a leading hotel in disguise, and under an assumed name, and when his errand there had been done, he had vanished as mysteriously as he had come. He had doubtless feared to use his own name at the hotel on the chance that the clerk or the local detectives might recognize it as that of a man who was wanted in New York; but of course he had been compelled to take that risk in the case of the notary in order that the documents might be all in order. He had carefully chosen the notary, however, finally deciding on an old man whose memory was notoriously bad, and who was known to take very little interest in the affairs of the day. That had reduced the danger to a minimum.

The Chicago investigation had yielded another mystery. The detective's agents there ascertained that a Constance Chiswick had lived in Chicago for a time, several years before, but that nothing had been heard of her for some time.

It may be imagined, under the circumstances, that Nick took an early opportunity to interview, in disguise, Legrand's feminine successor. So little seemed to be known about her that the detective had conceived a suspicion that she might prove to be Mrs. Byron West. What more natural than that Legrand should have contrived to juggle the affairs of his company in such a way as to put his woman accomplice—for so Nick looked upon Mrs. West—into the saddle in his place, and without the transaction involving any real change of ownership? That could have been done without the knowledge of the brokers. It would naturally have been impossible for Mrs. West to succeed him openly, for that would have been a virtual confession of complicity on her part, and would have led to trouble for her, but a change of name and apparent identity would have done the trick.

The disguised detective had quitted Miss Chiswick's office in the Garden of Eden—for she had taken active charge of her new affairs—with a strengthened belief that there was something very queer about the supposed change of ownership. He was not sure just what it was, though. Miss Chiswick bore a certain vague resemblance to Mrs. West, to be sure, but she looked quite a little older and of fuller figure. The widow had seemed to be nothing more than a society butterfly, loving gayety, ease, and pretty clothes; but this woman appeared to be a nearly perfect specimen of the type of the Western woman of affairs. She was very handsome, gracious, even fascinating, but she was also blunt, practical, exceedingly shrewd in a curiously breezy way, and thoroughly businesslike. Finally, although she was dressed expensively and in perfect taste, she gave the impression that she cared nothing for clothes for their own sake.

Altogether, there was something indefinable about her that puzzled and interested the detective in an unusual way. He had been disappointed in his failure to identify her positively as Mrs. West, but he decided that there was much more to her than appeared on the surface, and that she would bear watching. She might or might not be Mrs. West, but Nick would have given a good deal to know how she had happened along so conveniently, and had learned of Legrand's desire to sell.

He did not care to put those questions to her point-blank—yet—for, if she really were Mrs. West, he wished to convince her that her secret was safe. At the same time he told himself that, no matter whether she and the California widow were one, or whether she were some other confidante of Legrand's, she had possibilities of an exceptionally dangerous sort if she chose to use her talents wrongfully.

The next move, strangely enough, had been Miss Chiswick's.

Shortly after Nick's unacknowledged visit to her office he had been surprised to receive a letter from her. In it she stated that she had, of course, heard of the scandalous activities of Jules Legrand, and of the great detective's splendid work in uncovering the secret of the tower in the Garden. She incidentally expressed the hope that the notoriety which the Garden and the Crystal Maze had thus attained would not continue to be remembered against them on the part of the public, and then she came down to business.

She informed Carter, in confidence, that she had reason to believe she had stumbled upon evidence of still greater crimes committed by her predecessor, and begged him to come to the Garden and investigate the matter in person. She hinted, in fact, that one or more murders had apparently been committed in the Garden at some time.

She had not notified the police, she said, because she wished to avoid any further publicity if, or as long as, possible. Knowing of Nick's connection with the former investigation, and of his reputation for discretion, she had decided to put the matter quietly into his hands. She hoped that he would be able to find some explanation that would relieve her of any responsibility, and also make it unnecessary to give the facts to the public, but she feared that was out of the question.

In view of the delicacy of the matter, nevertheless, she urged him to visit the Garden after twelve o'clock—the closing hour—on a certain night named, and to tell no one of his destination. For a particular reason, which she would give him at the interview, she even made it a condition that he should not speak of the matter beforehand to any of his assistants.

The hour would insure their privacy, so far as the

public was concerned, for all visitors would be out of the Garden by that time. She gave the detective to understand, however, that she did not trust some of the employees of the place, which had been connected with it in Legrand's time, and consequently felt it necessary to impose certain further conditions looking to the secrecy of his arrival.

Finally she had apologized for all of these exactions, had given Carter permission to look upon them as merely the outcome of a woman's foolish fears, if he wished, but had pleaded with him to humor her—at least, until he knew all the facts.

It was in answer to this peculiar letter that Chick was on his way to The Garden of Eden.

CHAPTER II.

THE SKELETONS IN THE CAVE.

Miss Chiswick's letter had been very cleverly written, and the situation it hinted at was far from an impossible one, in view of Jules Legrand's character. His successor, in her tours of inspection about her new properties, might well have found certain evidence of other crimes, heretofore undiscovered, which she would naturally be slow to turn over to the police after all the undesirable publicity which The Garden of Eden had recently received in the papers.

Nick Carter had already been more or less suspicious of her, however, and all of the unusual conditions with which she tried to surround his visit—while they might, of course, be dictated only by an overcautious desire to prevent the circulation of any fresh rumors of scandal in connection with the place—looked a little queer, to say the least.

They suggested, that, whoever she was, she might be playing a deep game of revenge against the celebrated detective for his part in the recent revelations. Certainly the terms upon which she had laid such stress left the way open for almost anything to happen.

On the other hand, it was somewhat hard to believe that a woman, who was as clever as Nick believed her to be, would have invited suspicion by laying down so many unusual conditions in dealing with the detective, whose business it was to read between the lines and to look at all sides of every proposition made to him. But again, if she were really dangerous, she might have counted on Nick's reasoning that the very surface peculiarity of the requests was the best of evidence that they were genuine, and put forth in all innocence.

Nick had discussed the letter at some length with Chick and Patsy, and the upshot of it had been that Chick had offered, as he not infrequently did, to take his chief's place and make up like him.

"You know it has worked often enough," he had said, "and there's no reason why it shouldn't work in this case. If she's all right, it won't matter, and if she isn't, we'll be putting one over on her by the substitution. I can take care of myself, and if worse come to worse, I can play my trump by revealing myself. That ought to discourage any desire to actually make away with me, for they would probably decide that it would not be worth while to run the risk of the electric chair for the sake of merely getting rid of insignificant me. And whatever the play is—if it should prove to be phony in any way—you'll be free, and on the outside, ready to block it, instead of, perhaps, languishing in some other secret dungeon in the Garden."

Nick at once saw the advantages which his assistant's plan offered, but he was reluctant to adopt it on account of the possible danger to Chick which it might involve. Running all kinds of risks was a part of their regular daily fare, but this savored too much of letting his assistant suffer in his stead. However, Chick and young Garvan at length had won him over, and when the time had come, Chick had started for Ocean Island. It would have taken exceptionally sharp eyes and an intimate knowledge of Nick Carter's features, build, and carriage to have discovered that night that Chick was not the great detective.

Moreover, the masquerader was prepared to place himself unreservedly in Miss Chiswick's hands, abide by all her various conditions, tell a few justifiable untruths if she pressed him for an out-and-out statement to the effect that no one else knew of his coming, and in all other ways to give her a chance to clear or convict herself. Finally, he was prepared to take the consequences, whatever they might chance to be.

He went by the elevated, and walked along Spray Avenue from the terminal just as the lights were going out in the various amusement places. The season was nearing its end; therefore, the crowd had probably not been of midsummer proportions at any time that night. Now there were comparatively few belated pleasure seekers in evidence.

As Chick approached The Garden of Eden he saw that most of the lights, including those in the great tower, had already been extinguished. The main gates were closed. The entrance to which Nick had been asked to come, however, was one of the smaller side ones. Chick easily located it and knocked lightly. The little door in the wall was immediately opened.

"Mr. Carter?" asked a man's voice from the shadows within.

"Yes," Chick answered, in a startlingly realistic imitation of his chief's tones.

"Come in; Miss Chiswick is here," came the answer.

Chick stepped in boldly, and saw the woman's figure just inside the door. Apparently there was no one else about, except the man who had opened the door.

Miss Chiswick stepped forward at once and held out her hand. As Chick took it he did not fail to see that the man had thrust his head through the doorway and quickly surveyed the street—obviously to see if the visitor was really alone.

"This is very good of you, Mr. Carter!" Miss Chiswick declared, in a rather pleasant, even musical voice. "This is Davis, the new head of our night force here," she added, by way of introduction. "I had to trust somebody to this extent," she murmured, in an aside. "I did not care to be seen wandering about this place all alone, or letting in a strange man at such an hour."

Chick made some conventional reply, and found himself being led toward the center of the grounds. The man introduced as Davis followed them, but dropped some distance to the rear. Miss Chiswick stopped in front of a rustic bench under a clump of "embalmed" palms.

"If you don't mind we'll sit down here instead of going to the office," she said. "That will save time, for what I wish to show you is near here."

Chick assented and sat down after the woman had set the example. Miss Chiswick began speaking at once in a businesslike way, but in cautiously lowered tones, apparently to prevent Davis from overhearing.

"I am very glad you came, Mr. Carter," she said. "I was afraid, after I sent that letter, that you would refuse to do so, and I could hardly have blamed you, considering the many 'ifs' and 'provideds' which I felt compelled to insert. However, I might have known that you were too big a man to let such details blind you to the underlying sincerity of my requests. You have not told even your assistants that you were coming here to-night, and have left no word for any of them to that effect?"

"My assistants know nothing whatever about it," Chick assured her gravely, "and will know nothing. As for outsiders, that, of course, would be quite impossible."

All of which was true enough. Chick might, indeed, have added that he had no assistants; but he did not feel called upon to do that.

"Thank you," Miss Chiswick said simply. "And now to business. If I gave the impression in my letter that I was making a mountain out of a molehill, Mr. Carter, it was only because I did not choose to commit my secret to paper. I am not given to hysterics, I assure you, and I don't believe you would blame any woman—even a business woman, such as I am—for being rather wrought up over the finding of a couple of skeletons on her property. Would you?"

Her manner was direct and sincere.

"A couple of skeletons!" he echoed. "Here?" And the surprise in Chick's tone was not all put on for the occasion.

"Scarcely fifty feet from this bench."

"Human skeletons, of course?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carter. Do I look like a woman who would bring you all the way down here to tell you about finding a couple of very dead dogs or cats?"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Chiswick!" Chick hastened to say. "Your information came pretty near bowling me over, you see. I had not looked for anything as serious as this. Have you any idea whether they are those of men or women, or how long they have been here?"

"They were women, I'm sorry to say. The clothes in which the poor bones are still clothed prove that conclusively enough. As for the length of time they have been hidden here, I cannot say, of course. The clothing is well preserved, but the bones are perfectly clean—at least, I think so. I naturally did not examine them very minutely."

"I should imagine not. They must have given you a turn. It looked as if Legrand had been up to something worse than kidnaping and hypnotic experiments. But tell me all about it, please."

"Gladly. You can easily understand that I have made it my business to go over my new possessions thoroughly, partly with a view to any changes that might suggest themselves, and partly, I'm afraid, out of mere womanly curiosity, intensified by the knowledge that you and your assistants uncovered some strange things here. I could not seem to get rid of the feeling that there might be other hidden retreats, and the search for them has lent zest to my explorations. I found nothing of that nature, however, until the other day. Then I happened to notice, for the first time, a little opening in that big mound of rocks you see over there, at the left. I do not know that you are familiar enough with the Garden to be aware of it, but just on the other side of that mound is the lions' cage."

Chick knew it and said so. In order to carry out the Eden idea, many different kinds of animals had been introduced into the Garden. As many of them as were harmless, and could be tamed sufficiently to render them unafraid of the crowds, were allowed to run at large. The more dangerous animals had, of course, been caged, but their cages had been made as artistic and inconspicuous as possible in an attempt to give the impression that their tenants were in their native haunts. To carry out that illusion in such a way as not to alarm the timid, rocks, trees, and vines were extensively used to screen the iron bars.

The lions' cage was one instance of this treatment. Growing trees had been planted close about it, and from them hung festoons of vines, which also wrapped themselves about the bars in such a way as to give the impression that the visitor was seeing the king of beasts and his mate through a natural jungle screen. And this wild effect was heightened by the background formed by the big rocky mound, to which the woman had pointed. This mound was hollowed out on the cage side for several feet, forming a cave into which the lions could retreat at will.

Miss Chiswick explained this to Chick, more or less unnecessarily, and then went on:

"Now, at the back of that cave, far to the right, is an irregularly shaped opening in the rocks, protected by an iron grating. The grating—it is really a door—sets back in a deeper niche."

Chick nodded.

"I remember it," he said.

"Indeed? Well, as a matter of fact, I had noticed it before, more than once; but it was not until the other day that I felt any special curiosity about it. I had assumed, I suppose—if I thought anything about it at all—that the smaller opening led into an inner cave, which had originally been designed for the lions, but which, for some reason, had been subsequently shut off to keep them out. If I reasoned in that way originally, I was surprisingly near the truth. I could not guess, however, as to the real reason for closing the little entrance. If I had, I might not have been so ready to explore."

"You went in there, then?" queried Chick. "But how? The lions——"

Miss Chiswick laughed a dry little laugh.

"No, I did not really 'beard the lion in his den,'" she replied. "I did actually pass through the cage—as I shall have to ask you to do presently—but it was quite safe. That was another of the worthy Legrand's secrets, I suppose. But come and see for yourself. The skeletons are in the inner cave, guarded by those great, tawny beasts."

Chick followed her unhesitatingly, but even yet he was by no means sure of her. He did not in the least doubt the existence of a second cave, for the size of the mound left plenty of room for it; but he was by no means sure about the presence of the skeletons or his guide's motive in taking him there.

She had told a most plausible story, and told it without a single break or a false inflection. Yet, in spite of that——

"Well, here goes, anyway!" thought Nick's assistant. "If she's lying, she's certainly a blue-ribbon winner! I almost hope she is. It would be a sort of privilege to know such an accomplished prevaricator."

CHAPTER III.

PRISONERS IN THE LIONS' DEN.

"Here we are," Miss Chiswick remarked, a few moments later.

She had halted in front of the big cage, which, in the moonlight, was not easily recognized as such.

"Come here, Davis!" she called to the man who had been hanging around at a little distance. "Fix this cage in the way you discovered the other day. I wish to show Mr. Carter something in the cave, but I warn you that if you, or any of the other men, meddle with this without my permission, you will be discharged immediately!"

"Don't you worry, ma'am!" Davis assured her. "I don't like these beasts well enough to come snooping around here when I don't have to—and I'm not one of th' blabbing kind."

The two lions had started up at the approach of the little group, and were stalking about menacingly, switching their tails. Davis picked up a long iron bar and approached the right side of the cage. He pushed the bar through in several places and pried, with the result, that, much to Chick's amazement, that side of the cage was quickly shown to have two grated walls, an outer and an inner one.

The inner one was movable, and the prying pushed it along toward the center of the cage for perhaps four feet, thereby forming a protected passageway between the two gratings, or the true and false sides of the cage. By some means, Davis locked the movable section in its new position.

The door of the cage was close to the right corner; therefore it now opened into this new passage, instead of into the narrowed space in which the lions were. And at the rear, just opposite to it, was a small dark blot of blacker shadow, under the overhanging rocks, which indicated the opening into the inner cave.

Thus strangely was the way opened for them to visit the place, where, according to the woman's remarkable story, the two skeletons had been found. The improvised passage, to be sure, was no place for a timid person, for the excited lion and lioness were too close for comfort, even when one crept along as close to the farther wall of the cage as possible. Chick, however, was not nervous, nor did Miss Chiswick appear to be much troubled in that way.

"On no account must you follow us, Davis," she informed her employee, "but keep within earshot. We might possibly want you for something. Now, the way is clear, Mr. Carter," she continued, turning to Chick. "Just be careful that the lions don't reach through and claw your clothing—that is all there is to fear. Have you a pocket flash light?"

The young detective assured her that he had, and she led the way unconcernedly along the narrow passage, apparently without giving the animals a look, although they had crowded as close as they could, and were paralleling the course of the intruders.

Chick wondered for a moment over the fact that the lions made no attempt to reach his guide, whereas they seemed to be animated by a strong desire to get at him. He remembered the report that the woman had formerly been a circus performer. That probably explained it, if it were true, but Chick had not heretofore been ready to believe it.

In almost no time they were stooping in the low passage which led from the outer, open cave to the inner one. Miss Chiswick had gone ahead to unfasten the stout iron door.

"Jules Legrand must be a very clever man—as men go," she remarked, pausing for a moment. "Your ordinary rascal, if he had anything half as damning to conceal as these skeletons, would have substituted a solid iron or wooden door for this grated one, from an unreasoning fear that some one would discover his secret. Such action would have been almost sure to arouse curiosity, and might easily have proved his undoing. By leaving the grating just as it probably had been all the time, however, he contrived so that no one gave it a second thought. I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to turn your flash lamp on this lock," she went on, after a slight pause.

Chick did so, and the lock soon yielded. Incidentally, the young detective took the opportunity to turn the rays full into the yawning opening beyond, with the intention, if possible, of seeing what awaited him there; but his position did not permit him to command a view of more than a few feet of rough, uneven floor, strewn with loose rocks. The skeletons, if skeletons they were, must be farther toward the back, or at one side.

The woman stepped in, and Chick, having fixed his little light so that it would not go out if he took his thumb from the button, lost no time in following her.

He had barely set foot in the inner cave, however, before he was pounced upon from both sides at once. For a slit second he was conscious that the cave seemed full of living, menacing forms, instead of dead ones; then something struck him a dull but terrific blow on the back of the head, and he fell forward like an ox that has been hit with a poleax.

Chick must have remained plunged in profound unconsciousness for hours, for when he came to, the little, irregular doorway, with its stanch bars, was outlined against broad daylight beyond.

He was still in the cave. More than that, he was chained hand and foot, gagged, and even, as he presently discovered, fastened to the rocks by means of a heavier chain, which ran to a ring and a stout staple imbedded in concrete.

Before that, however, and in spite of extreme nausea, weakness, and a splitting headache, he had instinctively looked about him for the two skeletons which had furnished the ostensible reason for their errand there.

It is probably needless to say that he did not find them.

They had obviously been grisly creatures of the woman's imagination, conjured up for the sake of luring the great detective to the fate which she had prepared for him.

The young detective saw something else, though—something which caused his aching muscles to recoil with a start.

Chained beside him, to the same wall, and hardly more than a yard away, was another prisoner!

He, too, was gagged, but he was conscious, and staring

intently, curiously, at Chick, as if he had been trying for some time to draw his gaze, and to see if he could recognize him.

Chick could not be sure, but he got the impression that his cellmate did recognize him. If so, he doubtless took him for Nick, whose features had been widely known for years through the newspapers and magazines.

The faint, somewhat puzzled flicker of recognition in the man's eyes, however, was not what caused Nick's assistant to gasp—if he can be said to have gasped with that cruel gag in his mouth—and to open his straining eyes to their widest extent.

The fact was, that he recognized his fellow prisoner, and would have cried his name aloud, in incredulous amazement, if that had been possible.

And in the light of that surprising revelation, he guessed, in a flash, one of the motives, at least, which must have been behind his capture.

He—or rather Nick Carter himself—had been expected to make that very discovery. It had, indeed, been made easy for him to do so in order that he might be tortured by the knowledge and by his own helplessness, until such time as their captors chose to end it all in accordance with their program, whatever that might be.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO MORE DISAPPEARANCES.

It had been arranged that if Chick Carter did not return from Ocean Island by breakfast time the next morning, a search was to be made for him without delay.

He had left the detective's house on Madison Avenue shortly after ten-thirty at night, but at eight the following morning nothing had been heard of him.

Under ordinary circumstances, the young sleuth's failure to appear would have been enough of itself to have stirred things up, but, as it happened, there were several other things to put Nick and his remaining assistants on their mettle.

All the papers that morning contained column after column of alleged facts and ingenious theories concerning the mysterious disappearance of two prominent New Yorkers, both of whom Nick Carter had been asked to find.

It can easily be imagined, therefore, that the celebrated detective's hands were more than full. Nevertheless, in spite of the increased prestige that awaited him, in case he was successful, and in spite, also, of the big fees that would be his, in any event, he inwardly railed at the fate that had swamped him with work just at that time. He wanted, above everything else, to devote all of his time and thought to his missing assistant, and yet such pressure had been brought to bear on him by the friends of the two men, that he had felt compelled to take up these outside cases.

As a matter of fact, he had accepted one the morning before. The man who had vanished in that instance was a well-known theatrical manager, who owned, or controlled, several theaters in New York and elsewhere. His name was Maurice Levin. Curiously enough, he was, among other things, the chief owner and managing director of Exposition Park at Ocean Island, a larger and more pretentious amusement park than The Garden of Eden, and the chief thorn in the latter's side.

Levin had vanished in an unaccountable way the night before Chick's visit to the Island. He had had supper with a party of friends after the theater, and two of his intimates had accompanied him home to his luxurious bachelor apartment. They had remained with him for half an hour or so, leaving about one-thirty. That morning, however, Levin had failed to keep an important appointment at his office, and, upon inquiry, it was found that he had not slept in his apartment. The city was quietly scoured, without success, and finally, late that morning, Nick Carter had been called in. The affair was kept secret for a few hours, but the evening newspapers got hold of it in time for their last editions, their so-called "baseball extras."

As yet no trace of Levin had been found, although nearly twenty-four hours had elapsed since his strange absence had been discovered.

The second disappearance was also known before Chick had gone to the popular resort at Miss Chiswick's request. Indeed, the young detective had been reading about it on the elevated train on his way to the Garden.

It had caused a far greater sensation than the other, for a very good reason—none other than that the man in the case was Jotham A. Daniels, multimillionaire, president or director of scores of companies, and one of the most powerful figures in the financial world.

It had been the noted millionaire's habit for years to remain in his Wall Street office until the Stock Exchange closed at three o'clock. Then an ancient, disreputable-looking horse-drawn cab invariably called for him, driven by an old Irishman. In this cab, Daniels was usually driven to his palatial Fifth Avenue home. It was one of his many eccentricities, such as his lunches of crackers and milk, his shapeless, baggy clothes, his oft-expressed preference for five-cent cigars, and various other peculiarities, which had long made good "copy"—and reams of it—for the Sunday newspapers.

That afternoon the ancient cab had called for him as usual, and he had driven away in it, according to one of his younger partners, who had accompanied him to the door to consult him about some knotty problem of business. Daniels had never reached home, however, and nothing had since been seen or heard of him or the Irishman or his nondescript outfit.

It was twelve o'clock that night—the very hour when Chick reached the Garden—that Nick Carter was urgently summoned by phone to the Daniels residence.

The detective had felt in duty bound to take up the work, in spite of the fact that he was already busy, and would have preferred to keep himself free in case the situation at the Island should demand his attention. The reason is easy enough to understand. Jotham A. Daniels was one of those few men in New York who carry the destinies of tens of thousands of employees and investors in the hollows of their hands, whose slightest illness makes stock tickers all over the country chatter feverishly. If anything had happened to Daniels, the stocks in which he was interested would tumble far below their normal value, with losses that might easily reach tens of millions, or even mount to hundreds of millions. The very fact that he had dropped out of sight in such an unexplained way was enough to start a very serious bear movement as soon as the Exchange opened the next morning.

His associates would willingly have spent fortunes to keep the facts dark, but they had not succeeded. Daniels'

disappearance had somehow leaked out at once, and the newspapers had ravenously seized upon the sensation. It had been flashed all over the country, and extras had appeared on the streets of a score of cities.

The best that could be done now was to put some highly trained mind at work in the hope that the venerable millionaire might speedily be found, and the mystery be dispelled before untold harm was done. Nick Carter's had been the mind chosen for that all-important task, and the detective consequently felt it to be a sort of public duty to give the case the best that was in him, under the circumstances.

He and his other assistants had remained up for the rest of the night, tapping every possible source of information and running down every shadow of a clew.

Publicly, however, Nick did not figure in either case. It had been part of his understanding with Chick that each should take the other's place temporarily, until it was seen whether there was anything wrong again at The Garden of Eden. At that time Nick had not anticipated that he would speedily be drawn into anything so conspicuous as the search for Jotham P. Daniels, but not for a moment did he think of repudiating his agreement with his assistant. The latter's trip to the Island might be far more important than any surface indication could suggest, and if Miss Chiswick really had any secret designs on the detective, she must continue, if possible, to think that she had him in her power.

Accordingly, immediately after Chick's departure for the Island, Nick had disguised himself as his assistant, and when the call came from the Daniels house, he had gone there in that disguise. He had, of course, explained the circumstances sufficiently to those most interested, but, at his request, it had been given out that, in the absence of Nick Carter, his chief assistant had taken charge of the search.

Previous experience had taught the detective and his assistants that there were many more such out-of-date cabs plying the streets of the great city than the average citizen realized. They did not get unduly excited, therefore, when they heard of one or another having been seen, now here, and now there, that afternoon. Nevertheless, they investigated each story far enough to form an opinion as to its value.

The fact that the Irish cabby, O'Brien, owned his own ramshackle vehicle, and was, consequently, accountable to no one, made the hunt for him somewhat more difficult than it might otherwise have been. They soon found, however, where he lived—it was in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn—and that he kept his cab and stabled his horse back of his little cottage. The place was visited, but the house was empty, and so was the barn. Neighbors were aroused, and they informed the detectives that O'Brien had been a widower for years, was childless, and lived all alone. They declared, though, that he had no bad habits, except that he drank a shade too much, and that he was looked upon as an honest, steady-going old man.

A watch was set over the neighborhood, the names and addresses of a few distant relatives and cronies were secured, and then the search was directed into other channels.

O'Brien's neighbors had only confirmed the impression of the man which had previously been obtained by Nick from the millionaire's family and business associates. They had assured the detectives that Daniels had been riding in O'Brien's cab for over fifteen years, that he had taken a personal interest in the Irishman, and believed in him thoroughly.

The financier was an unusually shrewd judge of men. Had he and the rest been mistaken? Had somebody tempted the old Irishman too strongly? Or had O'Brien also fallen into a trap and been made away with? These are some of the questions which Nick Carter had to decide.

That which he hoped would prove the most telling part of his work, however, could not be done to advantage until business hours the following morning. For years the cab had followed an almost invariable route from Wall Street to upper Fifth Avenue, and this fact had come to be widely known among the merchants and residents along the thoroughfares used. The cab and its distinguished occupant had come to be looked for at a certain time every afternoon, and it was frequently pointed out to strangers. Watches were even jokingly set by it.

Nick hoped that this would enable him to determine, approximately, at least, how far along the usual route the cab had gone the afternoon before. It might well be, in fact, that he could find some one who was familiar with the usual movements of the ancient vehicle, and who had noticed something uncommon about it on that occasion. Inquiries could hardly be made in the small hours of the morning, though, when storekeepers and clerks were scattered everywhere, and residents were sound asleep.

And by the time New York was fairly astir, it had become all too evident, as we have seen, that the situation was seriously complicated by Chick's failure to return or report.

It was during his hastily snatched breakfast that it first occurred to Nick that Chick's absence might have something to do with the disappearance of Levin.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAB TRACED TO BROOKLYN.

The thought which had entered the great detective's mind unbidden was a startling one, and at first seemed far-fetched, but the suggestion was by no means out of the question.

Chick's failure to return seemed to confirm Nick's vague suspicions in regard to the strange change of ownership at Ocean Island and the new figure which had appeared there—Miss Chiswick. If, as now seemed certain, this mysterious woman had plotted to get rid of Nick, she might easily have had some other motive besides that of revenge for the "wrong" which she probably thought the detective had done to her friend Legrand.

The latter had been engaged in kidnapings of another sort. If the change of control had only been nominal, and Legrand was still the real power behind the doings at the Garden, it was by no means impossible that kidnapings of another sort and for another purpose were being indulged in.

When Maurice Levin had been reported missing, it had struck Nick at once, as a curious coincidence, at least, that the man should have been the moving spirit in the enterprise that was the greatest rival of The Garden of Eden. Was it so impossible to suppose that Legrand, through his cat's-paw, Constance Chiswick—or Mrs. West, or what-

ever her name actually was—had determined to get Levin out of the way, and thereby cripple Exposition Park?

To be sure, it would be a much more serious undertaking than any which he was known to have indulged in, for it seemed to imply murder, instead of mere detention; but Legrand had shown himself to be a thorough crook, unscrupulous through and through, and his feminine "successor" was apparently following in his footsteps. Crimes are like snowballs, as Nick well knew. They grow as they roll.

So far, the detective's theory had encountered no very serious objections. His analytical mind carried him on until he found himself reasoning, that, if anything of that sort had been contemplated by the Garden crowd, they might have felt it necessary—or, at any rate, highly desirable—to get him out of the way at practically the same time, knowing how hard he could hit, and realizing that he might at once see a connection between Levin's disappearance and the attempts to boom The Garden of Eden under its new management.

The more he thought about it, the more likely it seemed. He already had reason to know that the Garden offered unusual facilities for such underhand work. He had penetrated some of its secret retreats, but there might be others, for all he knew. For that matter, the same ones might be used again, on the theory that lightning does not strike twice in the same place. The Chiswick woman would be likely to reason—or the hidden Legrand might reason for her—that, especially with Nick out of the way, the detectives would not dream, even if their suspicions did turn in that direction, that the Garden management would utilize the uncovered places again for any similar purpose.

By the time breakfast was over, Nick had decided to pay the Garden a visit as soon as possible. He had jumped at a conclusion much more readily than he would ordinarily have done, but his assistant's alarming absence was responsible for that. The Garden was certainly the place to look for Chick, and it seemed more likely to furnish the key to Maurice Levin's disappearance than any other place of which Nick knew at the time. He could make the latter an excuse for a search, and had no doubt that the Ocean Island police would aid him, if necessary, even without knowing all of his reasons.

He hoped in that way to kill two birds with one stone. As for Jotham A. Daniels, Nick intended to make inquiries along the old cab's usual route before going to the Island. He would then be obliged, however, to turn over the active search for the millionaire to some of his assistants for a few hours. He regretted the necessity for delay in so important a case, but he did not see how it could be helped. He had engaged himself to hunt for the theatrical man before the financier had vanished, and one was as important to his friends as the other. Besides, the detective felt that he owed his first duty to Chick.

Too many hours have already elapsed, to suit Nick, since his assistant had departed for the seaside resort, yet he felt it incumbent upon him to carry the search for the American millionaire a little farther before going to Ocean Island.

As it happened, he got along with the Daniels case much faster that morning than he had anticipated.

He called all of his available assistants into service, including Patsy, Jack Wise, his wealthy society recruit, and Ida Jones, his feminine "helpmeet," as he sometimes laughingly called her. Together, they made quick work of things, with the result that by half past eleven they had narrowed the inquiry down very materially.

The accustomed route of the cab was along Wall Street to Broadway, up Broadway to Waverly Place, through Waverly Place, past Washington Square, to Fifth Avenue, and up the avenue to Daniels' home, in the Nineties. They could find no one, however, of all those who were in the habit of watching for the great financier, who had seen the cab the afternoon before at any point above the City Hall.

That was significant, to begin with. The Manhattan entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge is almost within a stone's throw of the old City Hall. Therefore, if O'Brien had turned aside there, it was almost certain that he had crossed the bridge. In no other way could he have so easily and quickly left the crowded streets of lower Manhattan, where his outlandish equipage and his eccentric and fabulously wealthy passenger were known to hundreds, at least.

The hunt was carried into Brooklyn at once, and confirmation of their suspicions that the cab had crossed the big bridge was soon obtained. Nobody had been looking for the cab on the Brooklyn side, of course, and it had, therefore, attracted comparatively little attention, having simply become a venerable public vehicle, with a plodding old horse between the shafts, and a driver whose face bore a well-defined map of the Emerald Isle.

Nevertheless, it had been noticed. The Irishman plied his trade in Manhattan, to be sure, but he lived in Brooklyn, and, before the Williamsburg Bridge had been opened, it had been his custom to drive to and from the Williamsburg section by way of the Brooklyn Bridge. That fact gave him away, for Nick soon found a grocer, whose store faced the main approach to the old bridge on the Brooklyn side, and who had known O'Brien by sight when the Irishman had formerly passed back and forth every day.

This grocer, a German, Bauer by name, had happened to be standing in his doorway about quarter to four the previous afternoon, and he had seen O'Brien drive past at a rattling gait, with a passenger nodding inside the cab, as if asleep.

That information gave rise to new speculations. All along, the question as to Daniels' condition had been troubling the detective. It was obvious that some means had been employed to keep the aged financier—Daniels was close to seventy—from attracting attention when the cab turned from the beaten path, homeward. The grocer's testimony seemed to indicate that the millionaire had been drugged in some way—unless, indeed, it was a dead body that O'Brien had been driving to Brooklyn!

It was at this stage that Nick Carter had received a genuine surprise. He had stepped into a Brooklyn drug store, not far from the bridge, to call up his house, as he had already done more than once that morning in the hope of getting some news from his missing assistant. Joseph, his butler, and, to Nick's astonishment, informed him that Mr. Daniels' office had been trying to get him for the last hour.

"They said to tell you to come to the office as soon as possible, that the Irishman, O'Brien, was there, and that it was very important."

The news electrified the detective. Joseph could give him nothing more definite than that. Evidently, however,

Daniels himself had not returned. It looked as if the cabby had confessed, or else that he had had nothing to do with the kidnaping.

There was no use in doing anything more until he knew the facts. He, therefore, called his assistants off temporarily, and, jumping into his car, made all speed to Wall Street. The run was fortunately a short one. When he reached the financier's office, he found that his second supposition had been the correct one. The Irishman had turned up in a state of great excitement and concern, with a strange but convincing story of having been overpowered in his Williamsburg house two nights before, of being carried, unconscious, to a lonely and empty house on the outskirts of Williamsburg, from which he had only that morning succeeded in escaping.

He claimed to have heard on the street of his distinguished patron's disappearance, and to have run most of the way to Daniels' office to tell his story.

It did not take the detective long to decide that the old cabman was telling the truth in every particular. There was, accordingly, only one explanation. The kidnapers had got rid of O'Brien in that way, and one of them had made up to impersonate the Irishman, and had doubtless remained in O'Brien's house until the morning after. He had then harnessed up O'Brien's horse and driven the cab to Manhattan at the usual hour, passed the time, somehow, until three o'clock, and called for the millionaire.

In some way Daniels had been drugged without causing a scene of any kind—either by an accomplice concealed in the cab, or by some mechanical contrivance—and the rest had been easy.

The Irishman was cleared, beyond any reasonable doubt, but the case seemed only the more complicated. If that sort of resourcefulness was being employed, it would doubtless prove much harder to trace the cab than if it had been driven by its owner.

Nevertheless, little time had been lost, for Nick was back in Brooklyn in three-quarters of an hour after he received the phone message. O'Brien was with him now, for he could describe his own cab better than any one else.

A fresh start was quickly made, and a minute description of the cab and horse was telephoned to every police station in Brooklyn and the outlying sections roundabout. An alarm had already been sent out from headquarters, but the detective was now able to give much more definite information.

As a result, Nick Carter found himself, before noon, heading for Ocean Island on a threefold quest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BURNED CAB.

The detective's information had not been arrived at in a moment, however, or without effort. It was the fruit of much clever work and the stirring up of the police to unusual activity.

The first important outcome of Nick's rapid-fire efforts and the authoritative information which he had been able to obtain from the Irishman was a report from a police station in Bensonhurst that a vehicle of some kind—believed to be a cab—had been burned on a tract of vacant ground in that suburb the night before.

Nick's high-powered car had quickly taken him, Patsy Garvan, and O'Brien to the station house in question. There they had picked up a patrolman, who had guided them to the spot where the vehicle had been burned. It did not take the cabman long to identify what little remained of his property; and his horse was found wandering around another vacant lot shortly afterward.

So far, so good! The next question was: How, and in what direction had the bogus O'Brien and his accomplices, if any, escaped with Daniels after the abandonment of the cab?

Some uncertainty seemed to exist as to the destruction of the ancient vehicle. The patrolman declared that the vacant ground on which it had been burned was on his beat, and that he had seen the fire about nine o'clock the night before. He had paid no particular attention to it at first because the boys of the neighborhood often built bonfires there, and they were not usually interfered with. As he came nearer, he saw one of the wheels outlined against the flames, and started across the lot to make an investigation. As he did so, a figure had vanished into the darkness. He had called in a half-hearted manner and chased the unknown for a few hundred yards, but had then given it up.

He took the figure to be that of a boy or youth—O'Brien was quite short, and it was reasonable to suppose that his double had been somewhere near the same height and build—and a nearer view of the burning wreckage had convinced him that nothing of any great importance had been destroyed.

He declared that old vehicles of various sorts were not infrequently abandoned in such places, and that when they were, the boys always made short work of them. He assumed that they had done so in this case, and that the person he had chased was the last lingering member of some comparatively harmless neighborhood "gang."

When he returned to the fire he found that the vehicle, whatever its original character, had been pretty thoroughly demolished before it was set afire, and that the flames had been busy with the fragments. He had taken precautions against the spread of the flames to the dry grass, had then gone on his way, and had thought nothing more of the occurrence, even when he learned of Daniels' disappearance in an old horse-drawn cab. It was not until Nick had traced the cab to Brooklyn, and, thanks to O'Brien's appearance, had sent out an authoritative description of the affair, that he had spoken of the matter to his superiors.

Whether the person who had been driven away by the approach of the officer was the man who had impersonated the Irishman or not, it was useless to look for Daniels or his captors anywhere in that neighborhood. The cab had doubtless been driven there as a blind, in case it should be traced. It was probable that the millionaire had been transferred to an automobile before the cab had been demolished, and was already miles away before the policeman discovered the fire. The supposed Irishman would have done his part by that time, and might well have been left behind to superintend the destruction of the wreckage.

The search, accordingly, took a new phase, and the neighborhood about the vacant lots was gone over thoroughly, in the hope that some one could be found who had noticed an automobile suspiciously near the spot where the cab had been burned, and at about that hour.

A man was presently found who had, indeed, seen a

big blue touring car standing on one of the streets which skirted the open space. That had been about eight-thirty. The spot referred to was by no means as near the scene of the bonfire as it might have been, but that proved nothing. The detective's informant had not noted the number of the car, of course. He said that there was one man—a young one, if he was not mistaken—sitting in the tonneau, and that another was tinkering with something under the hood of the machine. He had seen nothing of any one answering the missing millionaire's description.

The tip did not seem very promising, but other developments were to follow in such a way as to make it a link in a pretty strong chain of circumstantial evidence.

Inquiries were immediately set on foot in regard to the big touring car, and Nick soon had reason to believe that he was definitely on its trail.

A motor-cycle policeman, attached to the Ocean Island station, had been on the lookout for speed fiends on one of the main avenues of approach to the Island, when, at about half past nine the night before, he had noticed a large, dark-blue touring car that was traveling at a speed dangerously near the limit. It contained a single passenger, in addition to the driver, and the number plate at the back had been upside down.

The policeman had followed on his motor cycle, had soon overtaken the speeding car, and, riding alongside, had placed one hand on the blue machine. He had then admonished the driver to be a little careful, telling him that he was crowding the limit a bit too close. He had also ordered him to stop and turn the number plate over. The occupants of the car had seemed rather nervous, but the driver had quickly obeyed the order. The officer had mechanically noted the number as it was turned over—in fact, he had already read it upside down. It was "A30,432, N. Y."

While riding beside the machine, before it had come to a stop, he had also noticed that there was something bulky concealed under a lap robe at the feet of the men in the tonneau.

When Nick Carter heard this additional story, he lost no time in getting access to the automobile-registration lists. They showed that car number A30,432, N. Y. was registered in the name of Jules Legrand.

"Suffering sunflowers!" ejaculated Patsy, when he heard that astounding piece of news. "Is the Garden of Eden gang trying to pick up everybody in sight, or what? Here we've been choking back our anxiety with both hands all the morning and champing at the bit in our impatience to go there in search of Chick—and now it looks as if all roads led to the Island and the 'hot dogs!' First you get a hunch that maybe Levin has been taken into camp by this Chiswick person, and now, just when we were looking for the slightest excuse to switch off from the Daniels trail and round up the other two, along comes the 'info' that we've been on our way to the Garden and its new Eve all the time, and didn't know it. This business surely does keep a fellow on the guess and the jump!"

By that time Danny, the detective's chauffeur, had turned the nose of the powerful machine in the direction of Legrand's attractions, and Nick, having come to a hasty understanding with the police, gave the word to let her go.

A patrol wagon, filled with reserves, followed close behind.

CHAPTER VII.

CHICK PLAYS SAMSON.

Chick, meanwhile, had not been well enough content with his new quarters to remain idle, propped up against that very humpy wall.

He had stared at his companion in misfortune for some moments, his look one of profound astonishment. Then he had nodded his head in recognition, and the look in his eyes had changed to one of shrewd speculation.

The young detective was already revolving the situation in his mind.

He knew that their presence there had not been brought about by chance. They were there and allowed to see each other for a definite purpose. It was a refined and subtle form of torture which they were expected to undergo.

Nick, on his part—for he was the one to whom the rôle had originally been assigned, and who was supposed to be playing it—was expected to know his cell mate at once, and to tear his hair, figuratively speaking, at the thought that he had the key to one of the mysteries which were agitating the public mind at the moment, and was yet unable to use it. That little situation, it was assumed, would prove particularly maddening to the detective.

On the other hand, Chick's fellow prisoner was expected to recognize the great detective, and to grind his teeth—figuratively speaking again, for the gag in his mouth would have prevented any such manifestation of feeling—at the sight of the man, who, of all men, would have been most likely to find him if he had been left free to do so.

It was a pretty little bit of stage management, and seemed to suggest a feminine mind behind it. At least, so it seemed to Chick, and he credited Miss Chiswick with the original plan.

But that mattered little. What was to be done about it? That was the practical query that at once shaped itself in Chick's mind. He was not his chief, but he was supposed to be, and he felt that it was up to him to play the part for all that was in him. He confidently expected Nick to visit the Garden some time that morning in search of him, but he had no intention of waiting helplessly for release.

As a matter of fact, he had to admit the possibility that the chief might come and go without finding him. The cave had not been found when they had previously searched the Garden for the missing girls, although they thought they had ransacked the place thoroughly before they found the girls in the great tower. The cave was concealed in the cleverest possible fashion—by not really being concealed at all. The little opening at the back of the lions' den was in plain sight for every one to see, and, therefore, even Nick might not realize its possibilities, unless his assistant could contrive to make his plight known.

But that seemed impossible. Was it, though? Chick meant to find out before he was many minutes older.

As a first step, he fell to studying his bonds.

Heavy iron manacles were locked on his ankles, with perhaps fifteen or eighteen inches of chain between them. It was obvious that he could walk about if he could only release himself from the ring in the wall. That appeared to be a very big "if," however.

His hands had, of course, been allowed no such com-

parative freedom as his feet, for if he was able to raise them to his face he could remove the gag and shout for help. Therefore, they were attached to the chain about his waist—a double-looped one, which also seemed to run to the ring in the wall.

The precautions taken seemed to leave nothing to be desired—from his captors' standpoint, at least—but the arrangement did not daunt Nick's assistant.

"I may have to give up presently," he thought, "but it won't be until I've exhausted a few possibilities, and myself into the bargain!"

He found that he could slacken up the chain about his waist to some slight extent, and that the smaller chains, which held his handcuffs to it, would slide on the larger one. Consequently, he began slowly turning his body about so as to face the wall. At the end of five minutes he had succeeded in his first attempt, and found himself looking at the wall against which he had been leaning. His face was not more than ten inches from the iron ring which held him, and he was on his knees.

His companion was watching his every movement, with a pathetic look of hope in his eyes.

Chick looked narrowly at the ring and the concrete which held it. Both were new, and did not offer the ghost of a chance of escape. Plainly, the ring had recently been cemented into place in anticipation of just such an occasion.

The young detective had hoped for something more promising, and for a few moments he was tempted to despair. Then his eyes roamed a little farther—and flashed.

He had noticed something which held out a bare possibility of release.

The hollow mound of rocks was, of course, an artificial one, made up largely of rounded stones of the sort sometimes called "nigger heads." These had been cemented together roughly, just enough mortar having been thrown in to hold them in place without danger of collapse. The work had been done some years before, and the cement used did not appear to have been of the best. At any rate, it had crumbled more or less, and a few of the stones forming the roof of the inner cave had fallen down.

The new work that had been done in preparation for the expected "visitors" had been thorough, so far as it went. The stones at the point where the ring was placed had been thickly coated with cement, and the spaces between them filled up. But hardly a square foot in all had been treated in this way, and no attention had been paid to the surrounding wall, of which those particular stones formed a part.

In effect, it was like a patch of stout, new cloth on an old, fragile garment.

Chick's heart leaped as the significance of that fact came home to him. It did not matter how strong the combination of cement and stones might be immediately around the iron ring, if those stones, cement and all, could be wrenched loose from their neighbors. If he had a crowbar, even a chisel, he felt sure that he could soon pry out a section of the wall and walk away with it. But he had nothing but a knife—indeed, was not sure that it had been left in his pocket. And the best tool would have been of little assistance to him with his hands chained to his waist.

Only one chance appeared to remain. It was barely possible that he could brace himself against the wall and push backward powerfully enough to bring about the much-desired result. He nodded encouragingly to his interested companion, and prepared to make the attempt.

First, he managed to work the chain up a few inches, so that it crossed his back a little below his shoulder blades. The muscles there would take the strain better than those about his waist. He then got to his feet. The chain did not permit him to stand anywhere near erect. In fact, he was bent over in an extremely awkward position, with his forehead almost touching the wall.

Throwing himself back with all his weight against the short chain, he felt about with first one foot and then another, planting them higher and higher on the wall. The rough, uneven stones gave them plenty of purchase, and he was soon pushing back with all of the strength of his legs and back.

He knew well enough what would happen if the rocks actually did give way. He would necessarily fall backward with great force, and might easily get a fractured skull—if nothing worse—from one of the many loose stones lying about on the floor of the cave.

That was a part of the game, however, and he banished the thought of it from his mind.

In reality, nothing at all happened. There was no sign of the stones coming loose, and Chick was soon obliged to desist for a time. No one could have kept up that straining for long.

In five minutes he was at it again, though, pulling doggedly with all his strength. This time he managed to throw himself a little from one side to the other without disturbing his balance. This side motion promised to be more or less effective, for the old mortar began to crumble, and minute particles of it sifted down.

Encouraged by this, Chick kept at it longer this time, but was at length obliged to desist once more.

A third time he returned to that novel tug of war, pulled and jerked until his head reeled and his muscles ached, and then he had to give up temporarily.

This went on for two hours, at least. His fellow captive marveled at the young detective's endurance and stubborn persistency. But Chick saw progress, tedious and exhausting as the unusual, Samsonlike task was. He was gradually loosening the rocks and the new cement from their place in the wall. More and more of the old mortar was working out of the crevices and falling away, now in dust, and now in larger fragments.

At last, without warning, the whole section immediately surrounding the iron ring broke away, and Nick's assistant was precipitated backward with appalling force.

He was utterly unable to protect himself in any way, since his hands were firmly fixed to his sides. He struck heavily on his back and lay still.

Minutes passed without the movement of a finger. Chick had done what he set out to do, but there was no knowing how seriously he had been injured at the very moment of success.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LIONS TAKE A HAND.

Twenty minutes later the young detective's eyelids fluttered open. He looked about him in a dazed fashion for a few moments, then his eyes lighted up as he saw the gaping hole in the wall, and he felt the weight of the fallen rocks on his feet and ankles.

He writhed over on one elbow, slowly worked his bruised feet out from under the twenty or thirty pounds of rocks, and then laboriously scrambled to his knees.

His back was painfully wrenched, and his head had struck the rough ground with an impact that had not improved his headache, but otherwise he was not greatly the worse for his experience.

It was awkward work, but he got to his feet in the course of time. He was so stiff and sore that he had to stop and test his powers of locomotion before attempting to take the short, jerky steps which were all his manacles would permit.

Having satisfied himself that he could really walk, after a fashion, he approached his companion at once, and, crowding close, stretched out his chained hands as far as possible and began fumbling at the handkerchief which bound the man's gag in place.

The knot resisted for a time, but at length yielded, and the gag was soon removed.

His fellow prisoner tried hard to speak, but his dry and swollen tongue would not allow him to. In a short time, however, he managed to articulate gratefully:

"Thank you, Mr. Carter! You have done wonders! I would not have believed it possible for any man to have accomplished that feat. But let me see if I can help you in the way you have just helped me."

Chick was obliged to get down on his knees again and put his head on his companion's lap, so that the other's firmly held hands could get at the handkerchief. It was a tedious job, but in five or ten minutes the gag was out.

"Thank you, sir!" the young detective said. "I'm very sorry to see you in this fix, but we oughtn't to have much trouble now in getting out of it. I must tell you, though, that I am not Nick Carter, as you doubtless suppose. I am Chick, one of his assistants, made up like the chief for the occasion. The chief ought to be along here pretty soon, looking for me. He knows I came here, and if I can't manage to let him know where you are now, I'm not worth the powder to shoot me."

"That is good news, and I count myself very lucky to have been thrown in with you. Strictly speaking, you were thrown in with me, for I was here first. But explanations can come later. What do you propose to do?"

"Let me see what time it is first, if I can," the young detective replied, tugging at his watch. "Eleven-fifteen! I couldn't have come to much before eight-thirty or nine. There won't be many people in the park until afternoon, and that means that if we show ourselves prematurely, or give any inkling that we have made any headway toward release, we may find ourselves as bad off as before—if not worse. A crowd might prevent any further steps being taken against us in broad daylight—and it might not. With the place practically empty, though, they would doubtless take chances if they thought we needed attention. I——"

"You seem to know where we are," interrupted the other.

Chick told his companion, much to the latter's amazement, that they were in the so-called Garden of Eden, at Ocean Island, and then went on:

"I was about to say that I think we should go carefully. I am not much for calling for help at any time, and under the present circumstances such action might do nothing more than to put our jailers on to the fact that we are partially free. That wouldn't do at all. My idea is to take my stand close to the door, but screened as much as possible, and try to get a line on what's going on outside. The chief may be in the Garden at this very moment, in disguise or otherwise, for all I know. On the other hand, he may have been delayed, or he may possibly have come and gone. I don't think that likely, though. Anyway, it strikes me that the best thing I can do is to keep on the lookout for a while, and, if I see anything of him or his other assistants, to try to give the high sign. Those lions out there are really doing that for us, as it is, and their nervousness may be enough to convince the chief that there is something unusual going on near the cage. If I show myself at the door, they'll probably get wrought up still more. I only hope their actions won't cause an investigation on the part of the Garden people. I should hardly think, however, that they would attempt to enter the cave until the park is closed for the night."

Chick was right about the lions. The great beasts seemed to scent human beings in the inner cave, for they had been very restless, had emitted frequent roars, and, from time to time, one or the other of them had crowded into the narrow passage leading from the outer to the inner cave. In that position they had glared through the bars and occasionally shaken them with their mighty paws.

Chick's companion confessed that he had spent an exceedingly uncomfortable time on that account. He had been unable to sleep, his flesh had crept at the proximity of the savage creatures, and he had worn out his brain speculating as to the possible location of a cave so strangely and terrifyingly guarded.

Nick's assistant proceeded at once to carry out his plan, which had met with the other's complete approval. He was still chained to the rocks, but now he was able to take the rocks with him. Those held together by the new concrete formed an irregular fragment, showing like a boy's top in shape, or like a wedge with a rounded head. In other words, one end was sharply pointed, while the other measured ten or twelve inches across.

Chick realized, as he dragged it along toward the little door, how the prisoners of former times must have felt when they had heavy balls attached to their leg chains, and were obliged to drag or lift them about whenever they moved.

His progress to the opening was slow but sure. He approached it cautiously, fearing that one of the attendants had been attracted by the behavior of the lions and might be peering into the opening from outside the cage.

When he at last peered around one edge of the rude doorway, however, he saw nothing more alarming than two or three children in charge of a nurse girl. They occupied the only point of vantage from which any one outside could have looked into the opening at the back of the lions' den. That knowledge was a relief to Chick, but he drew back instinctively, fearing that he would be seen. He did not care to have the children or their nurse raise a commotion that would bring one of Miss Chiswick's underlings.

On second thoughts, however, he realized that there was little or no likelihood that he would be seen by untrained eyes or eyes that were not searching for him. The sun

was almost directly overhead, and the narrow passage leading to the little grated door was in deep shadow.

Reassured by that reflection, he ventured to look out again. The children had moved on, and the limited space, which was all his eye could command in front of the cage, was deserted. Apparently, there was no unusual disturbance taking place in the Garden, which indicated that a raid was not in progress.

Chick stood looking out guardedly for perhaps a minute, then he drew back suddenly. It was not a human form that had startled him, however. It was the lion, his great mane erect, his broad nose wrinkled in a savage snarl, his powerful teeth bared.

The huge creature had suddenly leaped into the passage, and in a second was clawing fiercely at the grating, while his tail thumped angrily against the rocks close on either side of him.

His instincts had doubtless warned him, in some unaccountable way, of Chick's presence just inside of the grating, and he had come to protest.

The young detective had no desire to enrage the beast any more than was unavoidable—at least, not until there was reason to believe that help was at hand. He therefore remained out of sight at one side of the opening.

The creature was not appeased, though. In fact, its rage seemed to grow. Its growls rose to a deafening, terrifying roar that filled the cave. It alternately threw itself against the grating and tore at it fiercely.

With a clutching at the heart, Chick guessed the reason.

Without his knowing it, the young detective's head must have been cut open by that battering-ram contact with the rocky floor, and the lion was working himself into a frenzy at the smell of blood.

The female, too, was trying her best to climb over her mate's back in a desperate effort to reach the door, the space being too small for her to approach in any other way.

Chick's first thought was one of fear that the unusual agitation of the animals would bring his enemies upon them before reëforcements could arrive. He soon saw, however, that there was no danger of that. The cave could not be entered except by way of the improvised passage or through the open cage, where the infuriated beasts were. Both methods of approach were impracticable under the present circumstances, for one of the lions, at least, was fully in the narrow passage connecting the outer and inner caves.

Without actually showing himself to the lion the young detective succeeded in craning his head around so that he could see one side of the door grating—the hinge side—and the wall immediately adjoining.

To his horror, he found that the lion's maddened attack was loosening the iron bars from the rotten concrete in which they were set. Unless the beast's attention were soon diverted, there could be little doubt as to the outcome. The little gatelike door would soon give way under the blows of those terrible paws or be burst in when the animal threw his great bulk of brawn and sinew against it.

In fact, a more prolonged and careful look convinced Nick's assistant that the catastrophe was even nearer than he had at first supposed—a few minutes off, at most.

If those bloodthirsty lions succeeded in breaking into the inner cave, surely there was not a ghost of a chance for the two chained and defenseless men.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME TENSE MOMENTS.

Nick Carter's motor car and the patrol arrived openly, and, like a whirlwind, in front of the main entrance to The Garden of Eden.

There was no need and no time for disguises or cautious approaches. They had sufficient evidence to justify a dozen raids, and the sooner they got to work the better.

The patrol wagon seemed to spill out its occupants before it came to a stop. The reserves were again under the command of Lieutenant Bentley, who had assisted Nick in his previous search of the place when the three girls were found at the summit of the tower. Under his direction they spread out immediately so as to guard the exits from the two resorts adjoining the Garden, as well as the latter, for all three were under the same management, and they knew there was, at least, one secret connection—the tunnel between the Garden and the Crystal Maze.

"Arrest everybody connected with the place, so far as possible," Nick directed. "Don't let any one leave until we see where things stand—not even the supposed visitors."

Those in charge of the Garden were taken completely by surprise, their first warning of the impending raid being the clanging of the patrol wagon's big gong as it cleared the way of traffic in front of the park.

There was no opportunity for escape. Miss Chiswick was speedily confronted by the detective and Patsy in her little office just inside of the main entrance. She had heard the gong and seen the detectives and Lieutenant Bentley push past the man at the turnstile.

"What is the meaning of this, gentlemen?" she demanded, rising haughtily. "You must know that this place has changed hands, and that there is no longer anything questionable about it."

"It may have changed hands, but it doesn't seem to have had a change of heart, madam," Nick replied dryly. "Let me introduce myself so that you may be under no misapprehension. I am Nick Carter!"

He paused and watched her expression. Her surprise and startled incredulity were evident. She was struggling to make some commonplace acknowledgment when the great detective went on.

"I can't blame you for being a little flabbergasted by that information," he said quietly. "I received your touching appeal for assistance, Miss Chiswick, or whatever you should call yourself. It seemed a little queer to me, and I sent my first assistant, Chick, in my place, to keep the appointment. I am sure it will be no news to you that he has not returned to the city. Where is he? And, incidentally, where is Jotham A. Daniels, who, I have reason to believe, was brought here last night in a car registered under the name of your predecessor, Jules Legrand? And, still more incidentally, where is Maurice Levin?"

The woman had obviously received a blow—or, rather, a punishing series of them. She leaned against her desk for support, and, although she managed to keep her eyes from falling before Nick's accusing gaze, the twitching of her eyelids told plainly of the struggle she had to do it.

"I—I don't know what you are talking about, Mr. Carter," she faltered, moistening her dry lips. "I wrote to you, and supposed it was you who called here last night.

Your assistant—if it was he—advised me concerning the matter I had in mind, and left the Garden shortly before one o'clock. I know nothing——"

"That's enough, madam!" the detective interrupted sharply. "The truth is what we are after, and it would pay you to give it to us in place of that sort of thing. However, that is your own affair, and I shall not waste time bandying words with you. We are going to search this place as it has never been searched before, and I have no doubt we shall be successful. If you should decide—before it is too late—to try to lighten your punishment by volunteering any genuine information, send for me. Lieutenant, oblige me by putting this woman under arrest and giving her into the charge of one of your men."

With that, he and Patsy left the office. They encountered quite a few scared-looking women and children, and a few men, all obviously visitors, who had been alarmed by the descent of the police, and were trying to leave the place. The detectives helped the police to reassure them and inform them of the reasons for their temporary detention within the inclosure.

Nick and his assistant had just turned away from the entrance and were passing close to the open door of the office, when they heard the phone ring inside. Nick impulsively entered.

"I'll answer that, Bentley," he said to the police lieutenant, who was in the act of leaving, after turning Miss Chiswick over to one of his subordinates.

The woman looked up quickly, with a glint of fear in her eyes, at the detective's words.

Nick strode over, lifted the receiver, and, in an amazingly close approach to Miss Chiswick's somewhat husky voice, said:

"Hello? . . . Yes, this is Miss Chiswick. . . . Yes? . . . Good! Let the good work go on! . . . Yes, I shall be here until three. . . . All right."

When he hung up, he turned to the woman with flashing eyes.

"The game is plain enough now, madam, and just as I suspected," he said significantly. "That, as you doubtless know, was Spillman, of Spillman & Webster, brokers—the firm which engineered this remarkable change of ownership here. Spillman let the cat out of the bag. He thought he was conveying to you the good news that United Traction, General Cereals, North American Coal and Iron, and one or two others of the leading stock in which Jotham A. Daniels is interested, had fallen off from five to fifteen points since his last telephone conversation with you, and that you were in a fair way to make a great 'killing.' I need nothing more to tell me why Mr. Daniels has been spirited away. You and your associates are buying gilt-edged securities at panic prices as a result of the millionaire's startling disappearance, and when you had accumulated all you could handle, you intended to release him in some way that would insure your protection. Then, when his stocks bounded up again, you promised yourselves to reap a golden harvest by selling your accumulations at a profit of hundreds of thousands—perhaps of millions. I'm afraid, however, that you are doomed to disappointment, and that your broker accomplices will rue the day they entered the conspiracy."

The woman visibly quailed before him, strove to speak, and gave it up. Nick ordered the policeman in charge of the prisoner to see that neither she nor any of her employees used to the phone in his absence, and gave instructions as to what to do if it rang. He was about to leave the room again, when Patsy Garvan ran in.

Patsy had not followed his chief into the office the second time. He had continued on his way toward the center of the Garden, looking about him keenly and wondering how best to begin the search for Chick and the other missing men. Nick had as yet made no very definite plans for the hunt, but Patsy was on fire to get to work and did not wish to waste time.

Now, as he bounded into the office, looking for Nick, his manner showed that he was laboring under great excitement.

"Come, chief—quick!" he cried. "I think I've located them, but there isn't a moment to spare! The lions have gone wild over something—or somebody—under the rocks back of their cage. They're trying to break into what seems to be another cave at the rear of their den, and it looks as if they were going to do it, too!"

Nick's eyes instinctively sought Miss Chiswick's face as Patsy poured out this agitated account of his discovery, and the searching look told him that his assistant must have stumbled upon another of the Garden's sinister secrets. The lions had doubtless been goaded on by something unusual, and the woman's look of guilt and terror sufficiently explained the cause of their unusual excitement.

Nick, his assistant, and Lieutenant Bentley, were out of the office in a twinkling, and running at full speed for the lions' cage. Carter had heard the beasts' roarings from time to time, but had assumed that they had merely been affected by the excitement occasioned by the raid. The noise had ceased now, and the lions were probably too intent upon their work of destruction to waste breath.

As they came in sight of the cage, the detectives and their companion saw a spellbound knot of policemen and Garden attendants—the latter already under arrest—in front of the bars. And as they drew near, there was a crash, followed instantly by a commotion among the onlookers, some of whom uttered cries of horror.

The lions had broken into the inner cave.

CHAPTER X.

SHORT—BUT NOT SWEET.

Chick did not impart his fears to his fellow prisoner until the latter implored him excitedly to tell him if there was any chance of the lions tearing down the barrier. Even then he made as light of the danger as he could, knowing that the other was helpless, and, consequently, that there was nothing to be gained by terrifying him with a statement of the actual possibilities of the situation.

His companion was not deceived, however, and lost his nerve pretty thoroughly, as a man much more used to physical danger might have been excused for doing.

But the young detective had no time to comfort him. He was too busy watching the progress made by the infuriated creature, and in cudgeling his brains for any possible plan of defense in case the barred door should actually give way.

He was weaponless. Chains connected his manacled feet. His hands were chained to his waist. It was hard to believe that any victim doomed to death under the teeth and claws of the lions in the ancient arenas of Rome

had ever faced his fate more hampered than he—and yet his cell mate was even worse off. Chick was at least on his feet, and could move about and dodge, while the other was still chained to the wall.

The young detective's only possible means of defense seemed to lie in the burdensome mass of rock and cement which hung from his waist and only partially touched the floor, threatening to trip him up at any moment. But what could he conceivably do with that? He could not throw it, owing to the shortness of the chain which attached it to him; and for the same reason, and the added one that his hands were not free, he could not wield it in any way.

If there had been room enough in the cave, and he could have swung the mass about his head by means of the chain, it might not have proved a weapon to be despised in an emergency. As it was, though, it promised, after all, to be more in the nature of an additional handicap than anything else.

Yet it was all he had—all he could think of. And meanwhile those furious paws and massive, tawny shoulders were making short work of their self-appointed task. The great beast's paws were bleeding, and one of his claws, at least, was broken and hanging by a few shreds of skin; but his injuries only increased his passion, and brute determination to get at the humans, whose scent was strong in his nostrils.

The lion was wasting an immense amount of energy, to be sure, but he had a superabundance of it to waste. Most of his maddened, unreasoning efforts came to naught, but enough of them were effective—far too many to suit Chick, whose fascinated gaze was held immovable by the titanic onslaught.

More and more of the worthless mortar was dropping out from between the rocks about the entrance, the rocks themselves were loosening, and the barred gate was shivering ever more violently under the rain of blows.

Obviously, it was only a question of time now—and precious little time at that—before both of the ravening beasts would be inside.

And still no plan that was worthy of the name had entered Chick's tortured brain. He knew that it was useless to shout for help now. In the first place, he could hardly hope to be heard if he called out from his corner inside the cave, and if he approached the opening and showed himself to the lion, the sight would only cause the animal to redouble its efforts. Besides, no one would be willing to get anywhere near the creatures in their present state, for fear of their own lives, and, as for shooting them——

Nick's assistant recoiled and stiffened before a new realization.

He had known that he could not count on any of the employees of the Garden killing the valuable animals to save their prisoners, one of whom, at least, had probably already been sentenced to death by the management; but from the first he had clung desperately to the hope that Nick might happen along just in time and put an end to the lions before they could make a meal of their intended victims.

Now, however, he saw in a flash that even that hope was vain. Nick and his assistants, even if they came in time, would be armed only with small-calibered automatics. If they brought policemen with them, heavier firearms would be available, of course, but the heaviest service revolver would not bring down a lion if fired from behind, and at any distance—unless by a miracle. The only worth-while chance of their proving effective involved the necessity of their being fired at the beasts' heads, and at very close range. But that was not possible, since the only entrance to the cave was that which the lions were occupying as they crowded into the narrow, shadowy space with their backs turned to the point from which help must approach, if it was to come at all.

"Well, that ends it, I'm afraid," thought Chick. "I might as well prepare for the worst. It means a terrible end for him"—he was thinking of his companion, you see, not of himself—"but I've done my best. The rest seems to be out of my hands."

And then, with no further immediate warning, the lion wrenched the door from its weakened supports by a supreme effort and bounded over the wreck with a mighty roar of triumph, his mate close behind him.

CHAPTER XI.

"MORE LIVES THAN A CAT."

The consternation of Nick and Patsy when they heard the crash of the falling door may be imagined, for their keen instincts told them that one, at least, of the men they sought was a helpless prisoner in the inner cave.

They clove through the group in front of the cage as if they formed the apex of a flying wedge in a hotly contested football game. One glance showed them the lioness just disappearing through the now unguarded opening.

Seconds were priceless just then, and yet Nick arrived in a flash at the same sickening knowledge that had so recently come to his imprisoned assistant. He understood thoroughly, in other words, how powerless any weapons they had would prove against those huge creatures of the wilds.

"Open the cage, somehow—break the lock!" he commanded Patsy, then turned to the dumb, awe-stricken attendants who had been rounded up by the police.

"Where is the keeper? Who takes care of those lions?" he demanded.

"I do," one of the men spoke up.

"Have you a rifle?"

He knew that those in charge of wild animals usually keep a powerful gun handy in case any of the beasts should escape and endanger life.

"Yes, there's a heavy big-game rifle in the office."

"Get it as quickly as you can. One of you"—indicating the policemen—"go with him. Jump!"

By that time Patsy had found the crowbar which had been used the night before to manipulate the false passageway wall, and was wrenching at the lock of the cage door. Incidentally, he was shouting encouragement at the top of his lungs to those in the cave.

The lock gave way in a moment, and seeing it, the group of attendants and police gave back quickly. They did not relish the thought of the lions getting loose and ranging at large in the Garden.

Nick sprang through and started to close the door.

"Wedge it shut with the crowbar," he said to Patsy. "Give me your revolver, Bentley."

But Patsy and the police lieutenant pushed past him into the cage.

"Give us two big revolvers, and one of you fasten this door as well as you can," Bentley ordered.

One of the bluecoats came running back with the two big revolvers, passed them through to Nick and Patsy, and then twisted the crowbar between the bars in such a way as to hold the door in place.

While he was doing so, the three inside started for the cave, Nick leading. He would have much preferred to risk only his own life, but it was no time for argument.

"Watch and go back for the rifle when it comes, Bentley," he called over his shoulder as he ran into the narrow passage.

If Patsy was bound to be in it, Nick preferred to have him at his side.

The detective's eyes, being unaccustomed to the gloom within the inner cave, could make out nothing at first, but his ears were assailed by bloodcurdling growls and sinister, scratching sounds. Nick did not wait to see just what was happening. A plan had come to him on the spur of the moment. He waved his arms and shouted to attract the attention of the lions, and, if possible, to induce them to leave their prey and attack him.

He had not taken time to explain his ruse to Patsy, though, and, to his consternation, the impetuous young Irishman lunged past him as he paused, and flung himself into the cave.

Nick's trick was quickly successful in the case of the lioness. She left whatever she was engaged at and sprang to the entrance with a snarl, just after Patsy had darted to one side and disappeared in the shadows. Nick's form was outlined against the light of the entrance, and it was Nick who was making that unearthly din. The animal, therefore, held to her purpose of settling with the noisy intruder who had delayed her anticipated feast.

The detective could see better now, and he saw her as she approached. He waited as long as he dared, then withdrew quickly to the outer cave and dodged partly out of sight around the corner of the passage connecting the two caves. His head and shoulders still remained in sight, however, and the police revolver was poised in the exposed hand.

The lioness hesitated for a moment, cast a longing glance back over her shoulder, as if in regret, and then came on, crouching and switching her tail as she did so.

Nick could hope for no better opportunity than would be his in a moment or two, but it remained to be seen whether the revolver, thirty-eight caliber though it was, could stop the animal in time to prevent him from being torn to pieces.

At any rate, so long as the lioness could be kept occupied outside, she could be doing no harm within, and the rifle ought to come soon. But he wondered how Patsy was faring—and Chick, if the latter had been in the cave all the time.

Just then he heard a shot within the inner cave. Young Garvan was at work, anyway. Heaven grant that he might be successful!

The shot behind her distracted the attention of the lioness for a moment. She was barely four feet from Nick when she turned her head to listen. The detective raised the revolver, aimed just back of her ear, and fired.

He could not possibly have missed, and the wound ought to have proved fatal at once; but the lioness turned, stupid amazement mingling with new wrath in her look, and sprang toward her enemy.

Nick coolly fired again, this time point-blank at one of her bloodshot eyes. His living, menacing target could not have been more than a foot from the muzzle of his weapon at the time, and as soon as he pulled the trigger he was obliged to shrink aside behind the rocks in order to avoid the cruel claws.

As it was, the arm which held the revolver was ripped to the bone before Nick could withdraw it.

But the lioness had received her death warrant. The second ball had entered her brain through the eye socket, and her mighty spring ended in an ignominious fall at Nick's side.

She writhed convulsively a few times and then lay still.

Nick did not feel the pain of his torn arm. He realized that he had been hearing other shots in the cave, and was in the act of rushing in, over the body of the lioness, when a shout from Bentley halted him.

"Here's the rifle, Nick!" the lieutenant cried, overtaking him and thrusting the powerful weapon into his hands. "But you're wound——"

The detective was gone by that time, however, and there was nothing for Bentley to do but follow.

"You're too late, chief!"

It was Patsy's voice that came out of the gloom. The words in themselves were alarming enough, but the exultant tone in which they were uttered was sufficient indication that they had no sinister meaning, even without the explanation which quickly followed.

"I got the big brute," the young detective went on. "I'm all right—only a few scratches—and Chick is, too—more or less. See to the other one, though. I don't know what your lioness did to him before you called her off."

Nick dimly saw a strange group in one of the forward corners of the cave, close to the left of the entrance. Patsy was leaning against the wall, smoking revolver in hand, and at his feet lay the huge bulk of the lion, with Chick sprawled over it, somehow, conscious but incapable of speech.

"See to them, Bentley," the detective directed, and then ran forward to the single dim shape beyond, which was motionless and huddled against the wall. He dropped his weapon, fumbled for his flash lamp, and soon threw its rays on the heap at his feet.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "It's Daniels! Is he dead?"

Nick was on his knees in a trice, and feeling for the millionaire's heart.

"No, he's alive," he called presently, "and doesn't seem to have been even mauled. I don't understand why, unless he fainted from fright at his helplessness when the lions burst in. In that case the beast would probably have taken him for dead, and his lack of movements or resistance might easily have dampened her ardor temporarily. That must be it. I only hope the shock hasn't been too much for him. He's an old man, and apoplexy isn't unlikely. He must have medical attention at once. See to it, Bentley. Get the best doctor immediately available, and then notify Daniels' home and office and have his own physician rushed over here. The whole thing will come out, I suppose, but his life is more important than secrecy as to his whereabouts."

"All right, Carter, but you've got a job here," the lieu-

tenant replied, as he straightened up after a hasty examination of Chick. "Your man must have more lives than a cat, and, even so, it's a wonder he has any of them left! It looks to me as if he's in pretty bad shape."

CHAPTER XII.

AN ENTRY IN RED INK.

Patsy was already working over Chick, and Nick now hurried to his first assistant's side. He found that Chick had just relpased into unconsciousness, and he seemed to be inextricably tangled up with the carcass of the lion. One of his legs was under the lion's body, and Patsy was just removing the other from across the animal's broad back. Chains rattled suggestively as he did so, and as Nick bent down solicitously, he was amazed to see a big mass of rock wedged fast in the dead brute's mouth, with a chain hanging from it, too.

"For the love of Heaven, what does this mean?" Nick demanded.

Young Garvan's Irish humor was still on tap, despite the circumstances.

"Oh, Chick just tried to feed the brute a few chunks of the wall, instead of letting it lunch off him," he remarked carelessly.

Then his tone sobered, and it grew enthusiastic at the same time.

"I tell you, chief," he went on, "our old Chick has outdone himself this time, for fair! He's never done any greater thing than this, take it from me—and I don't believe he ever will. If I had an entry like this in red ink on my record, I could die happy."

"But what did he do?" persisted Nick. "It looks as if he had pulled himself loose from the wall in some amazing way, bringing a good slice of it along with him, and then, when the lion arrived, stuffed it down his throat to keep him busy!"

"You've answered your own question, chief. That's the dope, I guess. I don't pretend to say how he tore that hunk out of the wall, and you can imagine we haven't had much time for conversation. But he evidently did it somehow. As for the rest, it speaks for itself, too. When I got in here he was on the beast's back—he had to ride it, I suppose, to keep it from clawing him any more—and this wedge was in the lion's mouth, where you see it. Chick must have shoved it in with all his might when the brute first made for him, and he couldn't get it out. That disposed of his mouth, but he had his claws yet, and he used them. Chick's thigh and arms are badly torn, as you can see, and his abdomen got some digs that may give all kinds of trouble. The only wonder is that the lion didn't disembowel him then and there! It was evidently to avoid that, for he was chained to the brute by that time and couldn't get out of reach of its paws in any other way, that he doubtless scrambled onto its back. They were mussing it up in great style when I happened along and lent a hand."

"And I'll wager you think you didn't do anything remarkable," murmured Nick.

"Of course not," Patsy replied promptly. "Chick was keeping the 'varmint' so busy that all I had to do was to pussyfoot it alongside, put the revolver to its head—and let the air get to its brains."

"I think I'll ask Chick about that part of it. I suspect he'll have another story to tell," remarked Nick.

* * * * * * *

The spectacular raid, so sensational in its nature and revelations, was over, and in due time it had its anticipated consequences.

Thanks to a robust constitution, despite his years, Jotham A. Daniels was soon his old self again. He was very grateful to Nick Carter and the latter's associates for their timely rescue, and insisted upon rewarding them richly. The great millionaire has never tired of telling of Chick's resourcefulness and bravery during that trying time in the cave, as well as of the amazing rapidity with which he recovered from his wounds.

Incidentally, as a result of Nick's prompt work, no one suffered to any great extent from the bear raid upon Daniels' stocks. Before the news from Ocean Island had time to circulate in the city, the members of the brokers' firm were under arrest for conspiracy. Spillman & Webster are both serving prison terms now for the part they played in the plot.

The Garden was searched in vain for Maurice Levin, as were the other amusement resorts connected with it. Nick was able the next day, however, to establish the fact that the theatrical manager had committed suicide because of some unfortunate speculations. Nick's suspicions had been natural, but, as it turned out, for once, unfounded.

Constance Chiswick, as she called herself, together with several of her hirelings, were tried and convicted for their crimes against the financier. The woman was committed to Auburn prison.

The charges against "Eve and the serpent in one"—as Patsy called Miss Chiswick—for her treatment of Chick were not pressed, and for the same reason—because she could be made to pay more heavily for her part in the conspiracy against Daniels—no very thorough attempt was made to probe into her exact status at The Garden of Eden, and, as for her past life, she managed to keep back the facts in a very clever way.

The important thing, however, was that she had been caught red-handed, and was speedily convicted.

But the case was not closed; Jules Legrand was still at large.

THE END.

The amazing results of the further and concluding investigations of Nick Carter and his assistants in solving the mystery of the archcriminal, Jules Legrand, will be told in "The Auburn Sensation; or, Nick Carter's Trail of Twigs," which you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 102, out August 22d.

THE SPEED OF INSECTS.

There are many insects which one would little suspect to be furnished with apparatus suited to swift and more or less continuous flight. The writer was traveling one day by rail, at about twenty-five miles an hour, when a company of flies put in an appearance at the car window. They never settled, but easily kept pace with the train. To account for this, look at the wings of a fly. Each is composed of an upper and lower membrane, between which the blood vessels and respiratory organs ramify

so as to form a delicate network for the extended wings. These are used with great quickness, and probably six hundred strokes are made per second. This would carry the fly about twenty-five feet, but a sevenfold velocity can easily be attained, making one hundred and twenty-five feet per second, so that under certain circumstances it can outstrip a race horse.

The Perfume of Madness.

By J. KENILWORTH EGERTON.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 100 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER III.

If any possible solution of the mystery surrounding the young woman's death had suggested itself to Tommy he kept it carefully to himself, and he was unusually quiet and thoughtful as we walked back to the studio. When our coffee was served the following morning he was in anything but a pleasant frame of mind—a sure indication to me that he had passed a sleepless night.

"I wonder if the working of the feminine and masculine minds are, after all, so dissimilar," he said, when the excellent café au lait had soothed his irritability. "It isn't uncommon for men to leave minute directions as to the disposal of their bodies after death, and when one remembers the beauty of the dead woman's hair and her evident refinement, it is not difficult to understand a natural repugnance to having it mauled about by a morgue attendant, and I can appreciate that any one would loathe the idea of being stared at after death by the morbidly curious crowd which passes through that gruesome place. The requests in that note are to my mind the strongest indications that Madame de Sauvigny —as we know her—wrote it."

"Have you doubted that?" I asked, for it seemed to me that he was trying to banish an unwelcome uncertainty.

"If we admit the possibility of murder—which is the only excuse for our investigations of the case—we must certainly doubt that," he answered. "Circumstantial evidence is always more reliable than direct, and it is only the ignorance displayed in weighing it which has brought it into disrepute; but in this case it presents apparent contradictions and conflicts with the human testimony. Take the case as it appears at the first glance, and it is nothing more than a rather unusual suicide. A woman is found dead from a bullet wound; the pistol from which that bullet was fired is still in her hand. There is not the slightest suggestion of a struggle having taken place, and on her dressing table is a note which strongly supports the theory of suicide. The handwriting is that of a left-handed person, and an ink stain on the finger of the dead woman indicates that she possessed that peculiarity, and that she had very recently used a pen; while the paper corresponds to that in her writing case. No one, so far as we know, saw the deed committed; but the evidence of the concierge and the other servants is negatively confirmatory, for they unanimously assert that no one entered her apartment. So far it is plain sailing; for direct and circumstantial evidence agree, and everything points to suicide."

"And if the woman had not been beautiful, that theory would probably have been unquestioningly accepted," I said; and Tommy smiled.

"Perhaps," he answered; "but while her beauty may have furnished a motive for her murder—if murder it is—it does not explain the mystery. At any rate, we find many contradictions. The woman is presumably left-handed, and the pistol is found in her right; but if we accept Le Garde's deductions—which, by the way, I do absolutely—that is explained, and the explanation discredits the testimony of the hotel servants without disproving the theory of suicide. It indicates that some one was present, either when the deed was committed, or very shortly after; but it does not necessarily follow that the hand which placed the pistol in hers was guilty of her death. Now, however, we come to the greatest puzzle of all, and that is the presence of what our fat friend Duclos calls 'The Perfume of Madness' on that single sheet of note paper. It is not evident on anything else about her, and yet, if it had been in contact with any of her belongings, they would be scented with it. I had the note in my hands perhaps five minutes altogether, and I have scrubbed them half a dozen times since; but I can't get entirely rid of it. Just get the gloves I wore last night, will you?"

I took them from the pocket of his overcoat, and the fragrance which came from them was strong enough to bring back the memory of Duclos' terror so vividly that I held them at arms' length; and Tommy smiled as he watched me.

"I don't believe that the perfume is strong enough to arouse your combative instinct," he said sarcastically. "The fact that my gloves retain it after absorbing it from my hands, which in turn took it from the note paper, is eloquent proof that it is penetrating and lasting. That is a very significant fact, and one which, perhaps, reconciles the apparently contradictory evidence." His face was very Mephistophelean as he rose from his chair and nervously paced the room, and I realized that he was employing his customary maneuvers of "trying it on the dog"; in other words, piecing together a theory and expounding it that I might indicate possible weak spots by raising objections.

"Supposing that we admit that some one was present, either at the time of or shortly after her death," he said. "For the sake of argument and to carry out more completely the 'Put-yourself-in-his-place' idea, we shall suppose that you are that person. You have an appointment with Madame de Sauvigny, perhaps to meet you for dinner. She does not keep it, and you go to the hotel to find the reason. On entering her apartment it is sufficiently apparent; madame is dead by her own hand. Now, what would you do?"

"In the classic language of our friend Clancy, I think I should beat it and make it twenty-three for mine," I answered, with a little shudder; for I did not care, even in imagination, for the rôle he had assigned to me.

"Precisely; but if you adopted ordinary precautions you would first assure yourself that there was nothing left to suggest murder in case you were unlucky enough to be stopped or questioned. Accept Le Garde's deduction that the reflex action from the wounding of the heart caused the pistol to be thrown a considerable

distance from the body, and what would you do? Ignorant of the fact that that was the natural thing, you would probably replace it near the body, and, if you were artistic in your method, you would even place it in her hand. Finding the farewell note on the table, you feel doubly safe, but to assure yourself that your name is not mentioned in it, you examine it carefully, holding it in your hands until it is impregnated with the perfume which you personally affect, forgetting that that perfume is unique, and that you are leaving behind an unmistakable evidence of your visit. Finally you seize a favorable opportunity to escape as you have entered, unnoticed, and, secure in your belief, that the case will be regarded as a suicide, taking no extraordinary precautions to prevent discovery."

"Which permits you to track me down at your convenience," I said, grinning; and Tommy shook his head.

"My dear fellow, if guilty people would lead absolutely natural lives and not attempt to cover their tracks after committing crimes, nine-tenths of them would escape detection," he answered seriously. "I should far rather have any one I am after suspicious and fearful, for it usually leads to self-betrayal. Does my theory seem plausible to you?"

"If you admit that the hotel servants could have been eluded, it is as good as another," I answered; and he made a gesture of impatience.

"I attach slight importance to their statements, in any case," he said. "In the first place, they are negative; they only state what they did not see. In the second place, if the concierge admits the possibility of any one getting in or out without his knowledge, it would be a tacit admission of negligence; for he is provided with that window of observation that no one *may* pass in or out without his knowledge. I am not claiming that I have found a solution; but it isn't a bad hypothesis to work on, and now I'm off to the perfumer's—'that is to say, the Maison Poirrot'—to get the mysterious orchids. Poor Duclos is so impressed with the idea of their powerful influence for evil that there may be something in it. I'll bring 'em back here, and I wish that you would stay in on the chance that Le Garde may turn up."

Inaction was never pleasant when Tommy was engaged in one of his peculiar investigations; but I was forced to accept it, and to kill time I picked up the morning paper. I was so preoccupied that my reading must have been mechanical, for I found myself wading through a list of "among those present" at a gala performance of the opera the night before; but when my eye caught the name "Countess de Thonier," my interest was aroused. No mention had been made of a countess in Le Garde's description of the famous hunter and explorer the previous evening, and when, a moment later, the detective himself entered I eagerly pointed to the paragraph.

"Another woman in the case—yes, I know," he said, glancing at the paper. "It makes me all the more anxious to interview the missing gentleman; for this is the first that any one knew of there being a countess. It is a trifle peculiar that she should appear on the scene for the first time just as her alleged husband has departed for an indefinite absence. That is the reason for my visit here this morning."

Tommy came in as he was speaking, a carefully sealed packet in his hand, and he listened attentively to Le Garde's news.

"The lady is the latest Parisian sensation," he continued. "No one has ever known that the Count de Thonier was a benedict until last night, when she made her first public appearance in society. She reserved a box at the opera in that name, and her appearance was so remarkable that she divided the attention of the audience with the performers, and, if anything, received the lion's share. Of course, it was reported to me when I returned to the prefecture, and my men described her as a beauty, and Oriental in the splendor of her costume and jewels. She was unescorted, and no one in the audience seemed to be acquainted with her; but it was not for lack of inclination on the part of the gilded youth who stared persistently at her box all the evening."

"And received no encouragement?" asked Tommy.

"Not the slightest, and they were overawed by a gigantic negro who acted as footman when she left the opera," answered Le Garde, smiling. "The man stood at the door of her box during the performance, and from the description I received of him he seems to be a combination of bodyguard and servant. In default of being able to question the count concerning the case in which we are interested, I am on my way to investigate the person whom your countrymen would gallantly call his better half, and I thought that it might interest you to accompany me."

"Does your position confer authority to demand an interview?" asked Tommy; and Le Garde smiled confidently.

"I hardly know the limits of my authority, for I have never reached them; but this is, I believe, rather a matter for diplomacy," he answered. "In any case, it will be interesting to visit the Hôtel de Thonier, which is one of the few remaining town houses of the great nobles of the old order. It is on a small street off the Rue du Bac, only a stone's throw from here."

Five minutes later Tommy gave an exclamation of surprise when Le Garde stopped in front of a great doorway and raised an old-fashioned knocker, for the building to which it belonged had anything but the appearance of a private residence. It was three stories high with a crenelated cornice above the eaves, and, with the exception of a few small barred apertures in the third story, not a window opened upon the street. The first story presented only blank wall, the second a dozen niches which had apparently once been occupied by statuary; but the arched doorway before which we stood, the keystone bearing an elaborate but defaced armorial escutcheon, was the only possible means of entrance. This was closed by two massive, bolt-studded doors, one of them having a small wicket or postern door let into it, a grille permitting the concierge to inspect would-be visitors before opening either.

"I've passed this place a dozen times, but always thought it was a public institution of some sort!" exclaimed Tommy, looking up at the defaced escutcheon.

"And it is only the fact that it was used for one, being a temporary prison during the Terror, which preserved it from destruction," answered Le Garde. "It was built about three hundred years ago, when the nobles kept small armies of retainers and depended upon their followers and the security of their houses for protection against the rabble. Its construction makes it impregnable to anything but artillery, and I confess that I am glad of an opportunity to see the inside of it."

The shutter behind the grille was opened, and the result of the inspection being favorable, the wicket was thrown open. A huge Swiss in a heavily gold-braided livery received us, and Le Garde handed him our cards, requesting that they be taken to the Count de Thonier.

"But the count is away from Paris, gentlemen," answered the concierge. "Since four days he has departed for Africa."

"To madame, then, if you please," answered Le Garde, stepping through the wicket as if he were sure of being received; but after we had followed him, the concierge closed the wicket and glanced at our cards uncertainly.

"The gentlemen have the honor of madame's acquaintance?" he said hesitatingly; but a look at Le Garde's face, which had become set and stern, banished hesitation, and he left us, carrying the cards on a server and grumbling to himself. We were in a long tunnel-like passage, which led through the building to an inner courtyard, glass doors on either side of it showing wide staircases with massive balustrades leading from great vestibules, which had previously been guard rooms, to the second story. Le Garde smiled as he looked about, his keen eyes noting every detail.

"Fill those anterooms with beruffled and ruffling swordsmen, and we should be back in the reign of Louis XIV.," he said. "Feudalism passes, but romance remains ever, and I wonder——" He paused, and, turning from our examination of the staircase, the reason was apparent; for before us stood one of the biggest and blackest negroes I had ever seen. He was as black as ebony, and his head was covered with the kinky wool which stamped him as an Ethiopian, in spite of the entire absence of negroid characteristics from his features. He was dressed in a livery which was very like a zouave uniform, and wore a fez, while in his hand was the server with our cards.

"Monsieur le Garde?" he said, interrogatively, glancing from one to the other, and Le Garde bowed. "You will pardon me, sir, that I come in response to the cards sent to madame," he said, in perfect French. "In the absence of the Count de Thonier, madame receives no one; but I shall be pleased to convey any message which may be necessary."

Le Garde had listened attentively, his keen eyes taking in every detail of the negro's person and costume while he was speaking; and when he finished he drew a package of blank forms from his pocket.

"You will please to present my compliments to madame, and ask her to fill out this form in her own handwriting," he said, looking sharply at the negro, as he selected one from the bundle. "As a foreigner, madame is undoubtedly ignorant that certain papers are required by the minister of police, and the count neglected to file them before leaving." The negro took the paper and started to carry out the order, but Le Garde called him back. "There is one for you to fill out, also; for neither your name nor occupation is entered at the prefecture."

"I am Zafir, valet-de-chambre to Madame la Comtesse de Thonier," he answered pompously. "If you gentlemen will give yourselves the pain to be seated, I shall ask madame to fill out the blank, and will do the same with mine."

He opened the door of the luxuriously furnished anteroom, but Le Garde held back.

"As it is a formality which will require some time, we should prefer to wait in the garden," he said curtly, and before the negro could consent or object, he led the way across the stone-flagged court to another tunnellike passage through the building, and we found ourselves in an extensive and beautiful Old World garden, surrounded on three sides by a high and massive stone wall, the fourth bounded by the southern façade of the house.

It was a strange spot to find in the heart of old Paris, a reminder of the days before the Revolution when the great nobles arrogated to themselves all of the good things of life and lived in a splendor which rivaled the Court of Versailles itself. If the part of the house which faced on the street and was exposed to the vulgar gaze was fortresslike and forbidding, it was compensated for by the beauty of the southern façade, which was reserved for the eyes of the owner and his friends. Carved marble balconies, exquisite statuary, and bas-reliefs were lavished on it; and in the garden itself, filled with rare trees and shrubs and with rich turf which had been undisturbed for centuries, there were a half dozen kiosks and summerhouses of quaint design and exquisite workmanship.

"The garden was said to rival those of the Petite Trianon," remarked Le Garde absently as we walked through the shaded, trim-bordered paths; but I realized that his eyes were noting the architectural, rather than the horticultural, features. "A Count de Thonier was a favorite of Louis XIV. and possessed tremendous estates and vast wealth; but, of course, the Revolution seriously curtailed the family fortunes. Enough was left, however, to make the present representative of the family a rich man, and it is curious that with such a beautiful home he should voluntarily exile himself so much of the time. These glass houses seem a new and incongruous addition."

A series of broad high greenhouses of decidedly modern construction near the middle of the garden did, indeed, seem out of place in this remnant of feudal France in which ghosts of Watteau shepherdesses and courtiers in silks and laces might walk; but Tommy apparently regarded them as more interesting than anything he had seen, for he hurried toward the half-open door.

From in front of it, startled by his quick footsteps on the path, rose an even more incongruous figure, a turbaned, swarthy man wrapped in a long cloak of white camel's hair cloth; and Tommy stopped in surprise as he extended a long brown arm in front of the door. He spoke a few words in a strange language, and, seeing that his words were unintelligible, barred the doorway with his body, and gave a shrill whistle. Another man, a French gardener in cap and blouse, and with a particularly unprepossessing face, ran toward us from a flower bed where he had been at work and excitedly explained that we could not enter.

"It is the fumigation against the insect pest, gentlemen," he said. "The fumes of a gas most deadly to man which we use to exterminate the parasite which destroys the rare orchids which my master has brought back from his travels. For many days it is impossible for any one to enter the greenhouses."

"I should suggest a danger sign, instead of this unintelligible idiot, then," said Tommy irritably, as he craned his neck to get a glimpse of the interior. The man was

watching every movement attentively, and his tremendous turban seemed always to be in the way of his vision, and Tommy turned away with a gesture of impatience.

"Perhaps another day, sir," volunteered the gardener uneasily. "Believe me, sir, it would be death to enter there now." And, watching the guardian of the door, I made up my mind from the way his hand was fumbling under his cloak that it would mean a fight, at least, if any attempt were made to brush past him.

Le Garde gave the gardener a tip which was accepted gratefully, and suggested that we return to the house.

Tommy glanced at him significantly. "I am studying orchids, you know," he said quietly; but when we were out of ear-shot of the gardener he turned to Le Garde in triumph. "Your fat friend who considers himself the incarnation of the Maison Poirrot asserted that the dried specimens of his famous orchid are the only ones in France!" he exclaimed. "There is a glaring evidence of the fallibility of human testimony, for in that greenhouse I saw suspended from the roof a basket with a large cluster of the fresh blooms."

"Which, perhaps, explains the deadly fumes which infest the house," replied Le Garde tranquilly. "I believe, however, that the object of our visit is attained, for I see Zafir awaiting us with the papers."

Le Garde hastily thrust them into his pocket, and the Swiss, with suspicious alacrity, held open the wicket for us to pass out. A knife grinder on the opposite side of the street looked up curiously from his work, and I say an almost imperceptible signal from Le Garde's hand, which was unacknowledged as he again bent over his grindstone; but while we were getting into our fiacre I caught a glimpse of his face, and recognized our quondam friend, the cabman!

Ten minutes later we were in Le Garde's office at the prefecture; and, seating himself at his desk, he examined the blanks which the negro had given to him.

"Here is a complete history, so far as the police regulations require it, of the Countess de Thonier," he said. "The lady's origin is a peculiar one for the wife of a member of one of our oldest families; but, after all, that is not the most surprising thing about the document."

He passed it over to Tommy, and smiled as he saw that he disregarded the writing and held the paper to his nose.

"No," he said gravely; "for it does not require the expert knowledge of the Maison Poirrot to recognize in the scent which this paper has absorbed, the perfume of madness!"

CHAPTER IV.

Le Garde and Tommy looked at each other for several minutes without speaking, the telltale document on the desk between them, before Le Garde picked it up and glanced over its contents.

"Significant as it may prove to be, the perfume is not the only point of interest about this document," he said. "For one thing, it offers the explanation for the Countess de Thonier's swarthy skin and the taste for barbaric splendor in her attire. She gives her birthplace as Rangoon; her father's name as Richard Abercrombie, and that of her mother as Talasinjhi. She is evidently the offspring of one of those mixed and irregular marriages which are so common in the Far East, and inherits both from a native mother."

"And no mongrel—equine, canine, or human—should be allowed to exist," grumbled Tommy, voicing the American contempt for the half caste. "Taking into consideration the fact that the rare variety of orchid from which this perfume is distilled is growing in the Count de Thonier's greenhouse, and that the perfume itself is used by the countess, it is fair to assume that she is worthy of closer investigation. Is it possible to demand an interview with her?"

"Possible, but hardly advisable, I should say," answered Le Garde cautiously. "I can assure you that no member of that household will leave Paris, for they are all under close observation, and anything in the nature of attempted flight will be followed by immediate arrest. And now, my dear sir, we should have the report of the autopsy on the body of Madame de Sauvigny." And he touched the bell on his desk.

The man who answered that summons briefly summarized the official and detailed report which he handed over, the only point of interest being the fact that measurements had demonstrated that the left arm was slightly more developed than the right, which supported Tommy's deduction that she was left-handed.

"And the coiffure?" asked Le Garde, when he paused.

The officer placed on the desk a paper containing dozens of hairpins, and four or five of those unattractive wads of hair, which are generally called "rats," which women employ in the mysteries of hairdressing.

"Elaborate, but not unusual. The hair was all her own, and, according to orders, I have brought away these articles, which were all that were found," reported the officer laconically.

Le Garde examined them closely, pinching and bending each of the "rats" between his fingers; and we watched him attentively when he slit one of them open with his knife and drew from it a small glass flask of curious workmanship. He gave a little exclamation of triumph as he held it up, the light from the window behind him making it glow like a coal of fire.

"Perhaps we have here the explanation of madame's strange request!" he exclaimed; and Tommy eagerly extended his hand.

"But, for that same request, it is not probable that her secret would have been discovered," he said, as he turned the flask over in his fingers. "I should hardly be surprised to have a genie escape from this when the seal is broken—it looks uncanny enough!"

The vial was sealed with red sealing wax, an impression in curious hieroglyphics sharply defined on it; and Le Garde quickly took an impression of the seal in soft wax.

"We shall soon know," he answered grimly, as he opened it.

Instantly the great office was permeated by a scent of cloying sweetness, so powerful that it was sickening, and he hastily opened the windows. I half expected to find the red veil which Duclos has so dramatically described before my eyes; but, on the contrary, the perfume seemed to have such a relaxing effect, morally and physically, that I felt no desire to assault any one, and would not have turned over my hand to insure the detection and punishment of the suspected murderer.

"If I were selecting a name for this, I should call it

the 'Perfume of Satiety'!" exclaimed Tommy, fanning himself vigorously with his hat.

Le Garde, holding his handkerchief closely over his mouth and nose, devoted himself to the examination of the flask. It contained no liquid, but when he turned it over and shook it, a tightly rolled slip of thin parchment fell out on the desk. Disregarding the almost overpowering perfume which came from it, both he and Tommy bent their heads over it; but they soon gave over their examination, and looked at each other in disappointment.

"Sanscrit—a cipher—what the deuce is it?" said Tommy; and Le Garde shook his head.

"It is, at any rate, of sufficient importance for expert investigation, and we should soon know its meaning," he said, as he jotted down a series of names on paper. When he had finished he handed the parchment to the officer, and directed him to have it photographed, and to send a copy to each of the men on his list. "From one of that half dozen, which includes the greatest linguists in France, we should have a translation of those hieroglyphics before evening," he said confidently. "Now, one other point. I have ordered the arrest, the moment he appears on the street, of the French gardener who spoke to us in the garden to-day. He is an ex-convict, and has twice been through my hands."

"Do you recall the nature of his offenses?" asked Tommy quickly; and Le Garde turned up the card catalogue on his desk.

"Burglary, in both cases; the second attended by aggravated assault on the owner of the house, who interrupted him as he was forcing an escritoire," he answered.

"Mr. Le Garde, for the establishment of a French gentleman, I should say that the Hôtel de Thonier was peculiar," said Tommy, with raised eyebrows. "A half-caste countess, an Ethiopian valet-de-chambre, a criminal gardener, and a turbaned individual, who may be the devil himself, from his unsavory appearance, are in evidence so far; and there is no telling what might be discovered if the entire place were ransacked."

"It is a search which I should like personally to supervise, and perhaps I shall have that privilege," answered Le Garde, smiling. "The name of the count is the first which we discover in our investigation; he is unfortunately inaccessible; but much that belongs to him is in Paris."

"Is there a good photograph of him available?" asked Tommy.

Le Garde produced three cabinets from his desk, "Full face, three-quarter, and profile; almost the requirements of the Bertillon system," he explained, as Tommy examined them.

"These are good likenesses?" Tommy said interrogatively.

Le Garde nodded. "Excellent; the count takes a good photograph."

I knew from Tommy's expression that in them he had found a new puzzle. "Is there any objection to my endeavoring to secure interviews with the members of that semi-Oriental and altogether mysterious household?" he asked.

"Not the slightest, now that it is under observation," answered Le Garde. "May I ask if you have any definite suspicions which you wish to verify?"

"No—nothing definite," answered Tommy slowly. "Not even formulated enough to be expressed in words; but I have an idea that you share my belief that the explanation of the death of Madame de Sauvigny will be found in the Hôtel de Thonier."

"Or from the lips of its owner, when his ship reaches port," answered Le Garde; and Tommy smiled.

"Many opportunities have been lost through waiting 'until the ship comes in,' and I am too impatient," he said, as Le Garde turned to the other papers on his desk and we rose to go.

"But it is a virtue which it is well to cultivate—when a woman is to be studied," answered Le Garde; and Tommy shrugged his shoulders.

"As I have told you, I do not find them a profitable study," he answered, with an assumption of indifference which did not deceive me; and when we reached the street his lips were set in lines which told me that he meant business.

"That medieval relic is too interesting to remain unexplored until any ship gets in," he said, with a grin. "I don't know just how to do it, but your Uncle Thomas is going to get over the garden wall, if there is no easier method of gaining admittance."

"You might try hypnotism on that fat-headed concierge," I suggested, and he looked at me curiously.

"Altogether, we met four people in that establishment this morning," he said thoughtfully. "The Swiss concierge was evidently, as you imply, a fat-headed fool; the others, unless I am very much mistaken, were crooks. Just piece that in with what we already know; that a mystery surrounds the death of a woman whose name is mixed up with that of the owner of the house; that the mysterious 'Perfume of Madness' is used by a woman, who suddenly appears as his wife, and that the owner himself is absolutely invisible; and—where does it lead us?"

"I think that it would lead to insomnia, if I were forced to read the riddle," I answered.

"Possibly, unless we find another crime which is quite as serious as the one we already suspect," he continued. "I take it for granted that Le Garde has assured himself that the Count de Thonier actually sailed on that ship. Unless he has, I should say that the chances were equally good that, dead or alive, he is concealed in that old rabbit warren."

"And what leads you to suspect such an absurd thing?" I asked incredulously; and Tommy laughed.

"Perhaps intuition; perhaps it is the effect of the 'Perfume of Madness,' but it is not absurd. A man of the world, which we can safely assume De Thonier to be, does not leave for a prolonged absence with the possibilities for such a general mix-up on hand. I think it far more probable that he has been quietly done away with, or that he is locked up in some cellar of that old place, which could probably tell stranger stories if bricks and mortar had tongues. I would give a good deal to interview that white nigger."

"White nigger!" I exclaimed. "Tommy, the traditional ace of spades was never blacker than Zafir."

"And at any one of Tony's establishments in New York you can have tan shoes dyed black while you wait," answered Tommy quietly. "Perhaps the same preparation was used on that delegate's face; for that is no more his natural color than the minstrel wig on his head is his natural wool. The man is Caucasian or Aryan; a

fact which Le Garde, who is an adept in disguise, probably recognized as readily as I did."

I laughed outright at the absurdity of the thing, but Tommy was in earnest.

"I tell you that I am right," he continued impatiently. "He stained his skin perfectly, but he made no attempt to disguise his features; and you never saw a man with a single drop of Ethiopian blood in his veins with fingernail crescents and sclerotics like his. There is a strong indication of crookedness, for honest men do not assume disguises—always excepting our friends of the police. Add to him the gardener with a criminal record, and that scarecrow who was quite ready to knife me if I tried to enter the greenhouse, and you have a combination which looks like trouble."

"And the mysterious, dusky, and beautiful countess?" I suggested doubtfully.

"Confound her—her sex makes her puzzling enough without adding mixed blood to it!" he exclaimed irritably. "I'll wager that we'll find her the principal cause of the trouble. Great Scott—look at that!"

We were approaching our own door, and his exclamation was caused by the sight of a well-turned-out brougham before it, from the box of which Zafir descended, and carried a card to the concierge. He was coming back to the carriage when we arrived, and, seeing us, announced grandiloquently that "Madame la Comtesse de Thonier desired an interview with Monsieur Williams."

Perhaps Le Garde's description had prepared us to expect something bizarre; and, in spite of the absolutely modish cut and material of madame's costume, our expectations were realized. Its many colors were vivid, but, strange to say, they did not clash, and they seemed to harmonize perfectly with her clear skin, which was the color of old ivory, and her large eyes, as black and mysterious as night. Her lips were a vivid scarlet, full and sensual in form; her nose long and straight, with thin, delicate nostrils; and the outline of her face a perfect oval.

Neither Tommy nor I was an expert in the details of woman's attire; but even the least observing of masculine eyes would have noted that her dress was of the latest fashion, and the design the work of an artist.

In spite of the restrictions imposed upon her by the conventions of Western modes, her movements were of the East; the graceful, well-poised walk of the woman whose feet have not been cramped by shoe leather, and whose waist has not known the curse of corsets. As she moved about the great studio, reveling with the frank admiration of a child in its beauty, it was with the lithe grace of a panther; and, disdaining the chair which Tommy offered, she threw herself, half reclining, on a large divan.

"This place is so—what shall I call it, cosmopolitan?—in its atmosphere that I feel I can be myself," she said, in perfect English, and with a smile which disclosed the prettiest teeth imaginable. "I suppose that in coming here I violate all of the conventions, and that you are curious to know what leads me to do it?"

There was a note of interrogation in her voice, and Tommy was quick to assure her of her welcome.

"Had you described the place as 'Bohemian,' I should have regretfully concluded that you were a Philistine, and have been suspicious that your motive was idle curiosity," he answered; and she smiled again in quick understanding.

"My curiosity is, at any rate, not an idle one, and Bohemia and dirt are too closely associated in my mind to make the mythical land attractive," she answered. "Mr. Williams, you are an American, or I should not be here at all—now can you guess why I come?"

"Guessing is only a figure of speech with us, you know, countess, and, as a matter of fact, I am a poor hand at solving riddles," he replied; and her eyebrows arched prettily as she looked at him.

"In that statement I doubt if you are entirely truthful, but I shall tell you," she said, half in earnest, half in banter. "In the first place, it is—because I am a woman!"

"The cap to that is so obvious that I shall refrain from uttering it," he said, looking at her in unfeigned admiration; and the ivory skin was tinged with a trace of color when she laughed.

"Which shows that you know little of my sex, or you would lose no opportunity to say a pretty thing," she said, smiling in challenge.

Tommy shook his head ruefully. "It's one of the regrets of my life that my education in so charming a subject has been neglected," he acknowledged; and she clapped two tiny hands together approvingly.

"You are, at least, an apt pupil, then!" she exclaimed. "Just a little lesson, then, in advance payment for the information you will presently give to me: Unless you are speaking from a lecture platform, don't generalize."

"If I might always have so charming an inspiration, I should know by intuition," he answered gallantly; and I opened my eyes in astonishment, wondering if this could be the same Tommy who, ten minutes before, had expressed anything but flattering opinions of the sex in general, and this specimen of it in particular.

"I imagine that you would soon become proficient, even with a lay figure; but I have not come to educate you," she answered; and without giving him opportunity to reply, she went on quickly: "Mr. Williams, I told you that I came, first, because I was a woman. That implies that I am curious, and I wish to know why you and your friend called at the Hôtel de Thonier this morning in the company of the director of the secret police?"

"It was entirely upon his invitation; he called here to see me about another matter, and thought that the visit might interest us," answered Tommy.

She looked at him sharply. "In some things you are reticent—I wonder if you would respect my confidence?" she said slowly; and Tommy shook his head in emphatic protest.

"Madame de Thonier, you hardly know me," he answered quickly. "Confidences are always dangerous, and I avoid receiving them—unless I feel that I am justified in forcing them."

"But I have half a mind to force mine upon you," she answered quietly. "I am in trouble—very serious trouble, Mr. Williams. I need a friend; I need advice, and perhaps assistance."

Tommy was decidedly uncomfortable, and I was malicious enough to indulge in a little secret gloating at his expense. Nothing would have pleased him better than to have run this woman into a corner, and to have pitted his wits against hers to obtain information which she might wish to hide; but to have her come voluntarily,

and try to force it on him as a privileged communication, ignorant of the fact that he was leagued with those who were watching her, placed him in a false position, and his chivalry forced him to protect her against herself.

"Please do not say another word, madame!" he protested vehemently. "I am a stranger to you, and the proper confidant of a young and, I judge, inexperienced married woman is her husband. Surely in his absence you have friends to whom you may turn in emergency—relatives—the British ambassador——"

"Oh, la, la—or the man in the moon!" she interrupted impatiently. "Don't talk nonsense. I am no longer a British subject; and, in any case, a Burmese half caste would receive scant attention from his majesty's representative," she continued bitterly.

"But a beautiful woman would always be sure of a hearing from him," suggested Tommy; and she straightened up and stamped a pretty foot on the thick rug.

"Any woman who is not positively hideous can obtain masculine sympathy—at a price!" she exclaimed. "It is one which I am not prepared to pay. My English relations would refuse to own me, and my maternal relatives recognize but one method of solving such questions as are puzzling me, even if they could understand them. In my perplexity I turn to you, an American gentleman, for it is obviously impossible to confide in a husband who has disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him."

"But, my dear madame, you can communicate with him by cable within three weeks!" exclaimed Tommy; and she laughed scornfully.

"Do you believe the tale of his sailing for Africa?" she asked; and Tommy gave a sigh of relief as he shook his head.

"To be frank with you, I had my doubts," he answered; and she nodded.

"A man does not walk out of the house in evening dress, promising to return in an hour, and set off for the uttermost parts of the earth, leaving his bride of a day behind him," she said bitterly. "Mr. Williams, that is the way my husband disappeared. Four days ago we were married in London at nine in the morning. When we arrived in Paris we went directly to the Hôtel de Thonier, and, after dressing for dinner, I came to the drawing-room, only to receive a message expressing his regret that he had been called away, but would return within an hour. At the end of that time I received this note from him."

She took a letter from her reticule and read it aloud, translating it into English.

"My Darling: Forgive me and trust me. I can explain nothing now; except that I am called away by a power which I dare not disobey. How long our separation will be I cannot say; but I beg of you to keep our marriage secret, to remain quietly within the Hôtel de Thonier, and to be patient until I can return to you and explain all. It will be announced that I have departed for Africa on a hunting expedition, which will save you from intrusion. The bearer, Zafir, is my old and trusted servant. He will act as valet-de-chambre and accompany you if you insist upon going out. Do not question him—he knows nothing, and my word is his law."

When she had finished, Tommy took the note from her, almost rudely in his eagerness, and, after glancing through it, held it to his face.

"Madame, you use a delicious and very unusual perfume!" he exclaimed, in seeming irrelevance; and she made a gesture of impatience.

"I do not—I hate all perfumes!" she said irritably. "The count's desk and paper is redolent of those beastly orchids, which I disliked particularly, even in Burma."

For a moment Tommy looked at her in astonishment, and then placed the note carefully in his pocket, and seated himself in a chair facing her.

"Madame de Thonier, I have not the slightest idea of what led you to come to me," he said quietly. "Perhaps it is of no consequence, but I can't receive your confidence under false pretense. It may or may not be in my power to help you; but one thing you must clearly understand. If I am to be of the slightest assistance to you, you must tell me everything, absolutely without reservation."

"Is it entirely chivalrous to exact conditions of a woman before offering aid?" she asked appealingly.

"It is not a question of chivalry," he answered impatiently. "I am willing to be equally frank with you, and to tell you that before you honored me with this visit I was interested in a matter which would have led to the investigation of the Count de Thonier's disappearance. That investigation will, in any event, go on; it only remains for you to decide whether you will further it by giving me your unreserved confidence, or make it more difficult by withholding something which may furnish the key to the entire mystery. You can hardly call it imposing conditions, for I ask only what is entirely reasonable and proper."

"And I will follow my first intuition, and trust you, absolutely and unreservedly," she said, after looking at him for a moment in silence. "I must impose upon your patience, gentlemen, for it practically involves the history of my life."

"One moment, madame," interrupted Tommy. "Does Zafir understand English?"

"No, I think not—I am not sure—why?" she asked; and with a grim smile on his face Tommy tiptoed to the door, and opened it suddenly.

The negro pitched forward into the room, and Tommy unceremoniously threw him out again, and commanded him to go below and wait with the carriage.

"That's why," he said quietly, when he resumed his seat. "Now, madame, we are entirely at your disposition."

TO BE CONTINUED.

A GIANT SNAPPER.

It is a fisherman named John, of Sullivan County, New York State, who tells this story, and he sticks to it that it is true.

He was fishing in Gander Creek one night, when he caught a snapping turtle weighing more than two hundred pounds. It took three hours' hard work to land the amphibian, and then he carted it home with his team. The snapper was placed in a hogshead, in the woodshed, and, to make sure of his prize, John covered the receptacle with planking and then piled a cider press on top.

"Now," said he, contemplating his work, "if that turtle gets away, he's a wonder, sure."

The snapper was no ordinary turtle. John went to the woodshed next morning only to find the turtle gone. John said it actually chewed its way out of its prison. There was nearly a half barrel of apples missing, too.

John was fishing in Gander Creek once more, a short time after, when he caught the same turtle, and, if all the details be true, when the snapper recognized John, it just opened its mouth and made a series of sounds, that might have been laughter.

"He is a comical old cuss," says John.

Well, this time John got his catch well in hand, and, profiting by his former lesson, determined not to trust it to the woodshed. It was taken to the barn, and there John secured it to a post of the structure with an ox chain.

"There, you old critter," said he, "I've got you now fer keeps this time. If you get away you'll have to take the barn with you."

The turtle shook itself, and then it was that John heard the swash of something within the big shields. It was the sound that follows the shaking of a barrel partially full of some liquid.

"That thing was chock-full of cider made from my apples it stole," says John, in telling of it. "How do I know it? Well, never mind, I do, just the same, and can swear that snapper was a regular keg of cider."

And John went to bed and dreamed of the neat little sum that would come to him through the sale of the snapper. He was up early next morning and went at once to the barn. He didn't have to open the door in entering. He just walked in through a gap left by the displacement of the whole side of the structure.

The snapper had pulled down the east end of the barn and made off with the heavy iron chain. That is the way John tells it. That is the way it is told in Sullivan County, and that is why John has gained himself a badge of distinction.

"That is gospel fact," says he. "The next time I catch that darned old-timer I'll blow him up with dynamite."

BECK'S DEATH.

By MAX ADELER.

Some years ago a man, named Beck, living in our State, went upon a voyage to California by sea. This was before there was a railroad and a telegraph across the plains. When the ship got down in the neighborhood of the West India Islands, it encountered a hurricane, and things got to be so bad that the captain finally announced that the vessel certainly would go to the bottom. Thereupon Beck wrote a note to his wife, saying that the ship was about to sink with all on board, and that when this reached her, he would be lying dead, at the bottom of the sea. Then he put the note in a bottle, sealed the bottle, and cast it into the water. The ship, however, came safely through the storm, and, after an unusually long and tedious voyage, arrived at San Francisco. In the meantime somebody picked up the bottle, sent the note to Mrs. Beck, and announced the loss of the ship in the newspapers. Mrs. Beck went into mourning, the life-insurance company paid her the money due from Beck's policy, Beck's lodge passed resolutions of regret, his family divided up his property, and the community settled down comfortably in the conviction that Beck was finally and hopelessly dead.

About eight months afterward, however, Beck suddenly arrived in town, without announcing his coming. As he stepped from the cars, a policeman looked at him a minute, then seized him by the collar and hurried him around to the coroner's office. Before he could recover from his amazement, the coroner impaneled a jury, offered the bottle and the note and the actions of the insurance company in evidence, and promptly got from the jury a verdict that "the said Beck came to his death from accidental drowning."

Then Beck went to his house, and found his widow sitting on the front porch, talking to Myers, the man to whom she was engaged to be married. As he entered the gate, his widow gave one little start of surprise, and then regaining her composure, she said to Myers:

"Isn't this a new kind of an idea? Dead people coming around when common decency requires them to keep quiet?"

"It's altogether wrong," said Myers. "If I was a corpse I'd lie still and quit flickering around on the face of the earth."

"Henrietta, don't you know me?" asked Beck indignantly.

"I used to know you when you were alive; but now that you're gone, I don't expect to recognize you until we meet in a better world."

"But, Henrietta, I am not dead. You certainly see that I am alive."

"Not dead! Didn't you write to me that you were? Am I to refuse to believe my own husband? The life-insurance company says you are deceased; the lodge says so; the coroner officially asserts the fact. What am I to do? The evidence is all one way."

"But you shall accept me as alive!" shouted Beck, in a rage.

"Mr. Myers," said the widow calmly, "hadn't we better send for the undertaker to come and bury these remains?"

"Look here," said Myers, "I'm the last man to do a dead friend an injury, but I ain't a-going to have any old played-out corpse busting in here and giving this lady hysterics. You pack up and go back, and dive into the ocean and stay there now, or I'll have you hustled into a sepulcher quicker'n a wink."

"This beats the very Old Harry," said Beck, in astonishment.

"No answering back now," said Myers. "When I want communications from the other world, I'll hunt up a spiritualist medium and get my information out of knocks on a table. All you've got to do is to creep off into the water somewhere and behave. I thought the fish had eaten you up long ago. Why didn't you take your clothes off so's to give them some kind of a chance?"

"You're perfectly certain I'm dead, are you?" said Beck, getting calmer.

"Why, of course."

"Can a dead man violate the laws?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, then I'm going to hammer you with this club, and I reckon you'll find me the most energetic corpse in New Castle County."

They say that the fight was terrific. First Beck was

on top, then Myers, and as they rolled over and over on the porch, the widow stood by and enjoyed the scene. Finally Myers explained that upon the whole he believed that he had enough, and when Beck had given him a few supplementary thumps, he got up, and, gazing at the prostrate Myers and at the widow, he said:

"Take her, take her, mister! You're welcome to her. I wouldn't have her if she was the only woman in the temperate zone."

Then Beck slammed the gate and left; and he started life afresh in New York.

THAT CIRCUS PARADE.

By BEN ALLEN.

When the circus came to the town of Little Peddlington, it was announced that a grand street parade would be given at a certain hour, upon a certain day.

All the people, as a matter of course, turned out to witness it, and the procession duly took place. It was not as imposing a pageant as that of a Barnum, still it was considered a very gorgeous affair in Little Peddlington.

There were live lions in cages, but they were old and feeble monarchs of the forest, and allowed the little boys to poke them through the bars and yell at them with impunity. Still, they were real lions—or had been, before they became so reduced in spirit and circumstances as to be compelled to take to the show business—and that was something.

The lions might have passed muster in Little Peddlington, but the "magnificent trained elephant bought at enormous expense from his imperial highness, the Maharajah of Seringapatam," was a dead failure. This was a sad blow to the inhabitants of Little Peddlington, for they had looked forward to the elephant as the chief attraction of the circus parade. What made their disappointment all the more severe, was the fact that, at starting, "the magnificent trained elephant" was the greatest success in the procession.

Punctually at the hour advertised, the elephant led off the parade, and the delighted spectators applauded enthusiastically. True, the elephant was rather smaller than what the public had been led to believe, but what it lacked in size, it evidently made up in intelligence, for, as it pounded along, majestically leading the procession, it waved its trunk gracefully, and bowed to the spectators, first on the right-hand side, then on the left.

"How wonderfully trained!" exclaimed some.

"Could almost believe that it was gifted with reason, just like a human being," cried others, and there was no doubt that the late property of the Maharajah of Seringapatam was installed first favorite in the public opinion of Little Peddlington.

Unfortunately, however, a slight incident now occurred, which speedily deprived it of its pride of place in popular favor, and tended seriously to lower Little Peddlington's opinion of elephants in general, and the Maharajah of Seringapatam's in particular. It appears that one of the mischievous urchins of the town, who formed one of the great crowd that walked beside the center of attraction, took it into his head to pinch one of the hind legs of the elephant, whereupon the animal directed a vicious kick at its tormentor. This, in itself, would not have surprised the beholders, but it did surprise them to hear a particularly distinct human voice from the animal's interior crying:

"Now, then, drop it, will yer?"

Slowly it began to dawn upon the spectators that there was more in the elephant, purchased from the Maharajah of Seringapatam, than met the eye, and they urged on the little local arab to repeat the pinching process, which he did with increased vigor.

"Christopher Columbus!" shouted the voice from within, "I ain't going to stand this for no circus show in creation."

Up went the rear of the elephant, and the hind legs, leaving behind them the body and head of an overgrown boy, who, squaring up into fighting attitude, hurled defiance at the crowd.

"I knows as I'm a fraud and a swindle, and have come down to be the hind legs of a hellephant, but I can knock the sawdust out of any clodhopper in this town, anyway."

The front legs of the elephant were meanwhile struggling gamely on, but the elephant's center of gravity had not been regulated for it to go as a biped. The result was, that after a few ineffectual struggles, the hind portion settled down like a ship at sea, and the front legs went up in the air, while a piteous voice screamed:

"Let me outer this, or I'll be choked."

The people pulled the front legs out of the animal, and thus saved another human being from an untimely end. The circus proprietor rode up, in a fearful state of mind, and commenced lashing the elephant's front and hind legs with his whip, but the damage was done. The show was a dead failure, and the residents of Little Peddlington lost their faith in elephants forevermore.

HOW HE WANTED HIS PICTURE TAKEN.

A young man with a wart on his nose dropped into a photograph gallery, and remarked that he wanted some pictures taken.

"Will you have it standing or a bust?" queried the artist.

"Bust!" exclaimed the fellow, as he picked up his hat. "Bust! Mister, do I look like a man who would come into a picture gallery to get on a bust?"

They explained to him, and finally persuaded him to sit long enough for a negative. The picture was a good one, and the nose stood out like a black cat in a bay window.

The fellow looked at it, and, as he handed it back, said:

"Shoot again, old pard, and see if you can't make the wart look like a piece of chewing gum."

They told him that it couldn't be done.

"Well, see here, now, pard," he pleaded, "my name's Truffles, and I'm engaged to a girl back in Injiana, and she wants my picture. She don't know I've got this wart; it's growed since I left there; and if you could just rub it out of the picture, and make it look like something that she's familiar with—a slice of bacon, for instance—I'd feel better."

They fixed it up for him, and, when he went out, he chuckled:

"That'll fetch her; she'll just naturally think I'm floatin' round in solid comforts like bacon and string beans and sich."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Blind Men Good Phone Operators.

Operating telephone exchanges is a new profession for blind folk. In a number of cities sightless girls are employed on switchboards, and in eastern Oklahoma there are several private exchanges that are operated by blind men, who perform their work as rapidly and efficiently as men with perfect vision. McCurtain has a telephone exchange that is operated by a blind man, who also attends to all the other work of the exchange.

T. M. Warrell, thirty-five years old, who has been blind since he was two years of age, is a half owner of the McCurtain exchange and attends to all of the outside work of the exchange. He is relief and night operator of the system. He keeps his own books, using the New York point system, which he learned in a school for the blind in Little Rock, Ark., where he spent eight years of his boyhood.

In addition to keeping the books and acting as telephone operator, Warrell installs his own telephones, strings the wires, clears trouble on the lines and instruments, and does all of the work ordinarily done by linemen with perfect vision.

In operating the switchboard, Warrell can answer and complete the calls as quickly as though he could see. He clears the switchboard of trouble by first testing and locating the wires as nearly as possible. Then he follows the wires with his hand until the broken part is found and connected.

If the lines are crossed from the outside, Warrell enlists the services of a small boy. True to small-boy nature, there is always some youngster willing and ready to help the blind man and trace the trouble until the youngster sees where the wires are crossed. Warrell then puts on his lineman's belt and spurs, climbs the pole, and quickly clears the trouble.

The blind man has less complaint from patrons of the exchange than many men who can see to operate a switchboard have. He is prompt and accurate and has a natural bent toward electricity and a love for his work, and he has never asked any favors because of his affliction.

Lion Tamer's Injuries Fatal.

Gene Deveilh, a lion tamer in an animal show exhibiting at Binghamton, N. Y., is dead from injuries he received when a lion attacked and bit him during a performance. The lion has a bad record. It killed its keeper in New Orleans three years ago, and badly injured its trainer in Chicago last summer.

Four-leaf Clovers Lucky for Beggar.

Four-leaf clovers may be lucky—and undoubtedly they are for at least one man, wanted badly by the Los Angeles police—but you can't make residents of that city think so. True, the clover leaves made a capitalist out of a beggar. From a "panhandler," who begged for alms, they converted him into a well-to-do gentleman, who could afford to travel for his "health."

The Four-leaf Clover Syndicate, now defunct, was the making of Frederick Wilson, and the unmaking of a number of its customers. Wilson came to Los Angeles a beggar, as mentioned before, and with the funds he procured on the streets he purchased a new suit and a cheap Panama hat. Then he went to Santa Ana, and from a rancher purchased a great quantity of clover plants. This was the starting of his syndicate.

He told his victims of the great profit in raising four-leaf clovers. There was a great demand for them, he said, for every one wanted the lucky foliage, and it was simplicity itself to sell the clovers for $1 to $5 each.

He had, he said, a great quantity of seed guaranteed to produce clover with four leaves. This was a very expensive seed, and he must sell it at a high figure, but he would sign a contract to buy all the mature clover plants at seventy five cents each.

He found a prosperous trade. The seed sold well. To the skeptical about his seed, he would show a great box of growing clover, and each leaf had four petals. It was convincing, and most profitable.

So the seed was sold in quantity. Hundreds bought it and established incipient gardens in their yards. And now that it is about time for the leaves to show their real shape, they all develop into the customary and luckless three leaves.

When the police went to Wilson's room, they found the sample box of plants. Close scrutiny was given the leaves, and each developed a fourth leaf, cunningly attached with skillful fingers, dexterously bound with a tiny strip of green court plaster to make the squad of four.

The man had fled four days before his rent expired. He left only three papers. One was a bill from a drug store, asking for payment for some green court plaster. Another was a letter from the Santa Ana rancher, offering to provide more clover plants at the rate of ten cents a hundred. And the third was from a seed store, announcing that Frederick Wilson was indebted to the company for twelve bags of clover seed.

Teacher Must Tell Her Age.

Women teachers in Illinois public schools are wrought up over a call made on them for a statement of their age. This demand is only one of a large number the Illinois school survey is making.

The survey wants to know, among other things, the salary of the teacher's father, all the family history, where she goes after school hours and on her vacation, how much it costs her to live, how much she spends on dress, and a thousand and one other intimate details of her life.

The survey is being conducted for the purpose of investigating school conditions and efficiency.

Bee Flies Down Man's Throat and Sits Down.

John Andrews, of Boulder, Col., is not only bemoaning his sad lot, but he is keeping soda and vinegar right next to his stomach. He is both a sick and a puzzled man. A little bee, with a great, big stinger, stung him in the stomach. The busy little insect with the red-hot needle in the sitting part of its anatomy, apparently believed in getting to the inside of things, for it went right down

Andrews' throat and threw out its anchor so that he couldn't cough it up. Then, Andrews says, it just kept on stinging like it was trying to burn its way out.

A doctor who called pronounced John a very sick man, and John didn't dispute him. The physician declared his patient was in a serious condition, and that even if he recovered, he would never feel the same toward bees.

Andrews is puzzled because he can't understand how the bee got inside the mosquito-bar netting he wore while enticing a swarm into a hive. Once inside the netting, it was easy for the insect, for Andrews opened his mouth in horror.

Treetop Saves Balloonist.

Professor C. W. Andrews, who claims the distinction of being the only balloonist with wooden legs, apparently thinks nothing of facing death. When the balloon in which he had ascended fell and alighted in a tree at Kansas City, Mo., a crowd surrounded him, expecting to find him dead.

"Narrow escape," they said, amid congratulations.

"Nothing at all," he replied, "I've often done that."

Horse an Outlaw Two Years.

It required eight men to capture and subdue a vicious stallion, which attacked and almost killed S. D. Thacker soon after he had purchased the animal at Fayette, Ind. Thacker and S. C. Tracey were leading the animal behind a buggy, and when the former got out to adjust the harness on the horse he was driving, the stallion struck him with his front feet and continued the attack by stamping on him.

Tracey ended the attack by driving on with the rig, but the stallion soon broke away. The animal had been known as an "outlaw" for two years, and it has been impossible to ride or drive it.

Turkeys Get Fat on Locusts.

The plague of seventeen-year locusts which have appeared in parts of West Virginia, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania has turned out to be a blessing to the farmers owning turkeys and to the fishermen.

The locusts have done little damage so far because of the lateness of crops and fruit. On the other hand, the young turkeys have grown faster and become fatter than in any previous season, the locusts proving fine food for them.

Fishermen are making the biggest catches in years by using the locusts for bait.

Heat Gives Women to Theater Seats.

When 1,000 women who were attending a midsummer operatic performance in the Hippodrome Theater, at Pottsvilla, Pa., were ready to leave after the show, about 200 of them found that they were unable to move, the intense heat having glued them to their seats. Many were unable to get away without leaving parts of their dresses behind. Skirts had slashes where they were never intended by the dressmakers.

Dog Hero Gives Chase to Rude William Goat.

The corner at Main Street and Ocean Avenue, Patchogue, L. I., was thronged with women shoppers when a black-and-white goat came mincing up. "How cute!" cried two of the women.

The goat heard, paused in his progress, and eyed the women coldly.

"Ma-a-a-a-a-a-a!" said the goat, and danced for the sidewalk. The women started for the nearest store, but they were fashionably dressed, and this season's styles are no more conducive to ease and rapidity of movement than were last season's. If it hadn't been for a bulldog, there is no telling what might have happened to the women.

The bulldog was on his way down the sidewalk the women were so anxious to leave. The goat saw him and added seven "A's" to what he had said to the women. The last that was seen of either was at the bay end of Ocean Avenue. The goat was still talking as he went, and the dog was saying nothing but was rapidly gaining on William.

Worry Makes Pitcher Bald.

Bill Burns, an American Association pitcher, and formerly in the big league, is bald. One day one of Burns' teammates grew curious regarding his bald pate.

"How'd you happen to lose your hair so early in life?" queried the teammate.

Burns didn't hesitate.

"Two and three on the batter and the bases full, so often," drawled Bill.

Farmer Pulls Hogs' Teeth.

J. C. Snyder, of Greeley, Col., will be made an honorary member of the State Dental Society. Discovering that his hogs were suffering from black tooth, Snyder extracted 1,700 teeth from 300 hogs in four hours.

Autoists Run Over Bodies.

Hammond and Gary, Ind., police are searching for practical jokers who have been terrorizing autoists on secluded, dark roads with dummies of men and women. The autoists apparently thought they were killing pedestrians when they ran over these forms in the road, for several women have been made seriously ill by screams from the roadside at these times.

Shark Eats Alarm Clock; Gets Scare.

Chief Steward Baillie, of the liner *Metapan*, which arrived at New York from Central America, has found a new way of scaring sharks. He wound an alarm clock, set the alarm to go off within twenty minutes, tied the timepiece to a rope, and dropped it overboard. A shark swallowed it, and when the alarm went off, the fish stood on its tail, turned somersaults, and tried to stop the bell by swallowing lots of sea water. It finally headed for the open sea at terrific speed, lashing the water with its tail.

Death is Told by Black Cat's Yowls.

One of Edgar Allan Poe's weirdest stories was built around the mournful yowls of a black cat which was sealed between the walls of an old house with the body of its murdered owner at Los Angeles, Cal. A brutal husband slew his wife, mutilated her pet cat, and then threw them into a cavity in a wall and plastered it up. The cries of the cat finally brought rescuers, who recovered the body of the woman and learned of the murder.

A mystery quite a bit like Poe's story, in that a black cat led to the discovery of a human tragedy, was unearthed here by the police when they broke into a two-

story shack and found the body of Frank Hamble, forty-four years old. The mournful wailing of the cat, which no one could find, had kept an entire neighborhood awake for many nights. The strange noises were also heard in the daytime, but as night came, they grew louder.

Finally the prolonged absence of Hamble also became a mystery. He had been known to be a hard drinker, and neighbors at first thought he had gone off on another spree.

Patrolman C. E. Thompson, who lives near the Hamble shack, went with neighbors into the house. It was then that both mysteries were solved. The man's body lay on the bed, and on his breast was a black cat, its life ebbing away—its gaunt body mute evidence of suffering from starvation after the man had died. The doors were locked and the animal had been unable to get food or water. On the table was a scrap of paper with two letters, "Mo——," written on it, showing that it was the unfinished letter of a dying man to his mother.

For the last five years Hamble had lived alone in the shack, striving to fight off his craving for drink, which had changed him from a capable, prosperous man to a nervous wreck. He was a college graduate, and at the time he gave up work was traveling agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad.

At times it seemed that he was about to escape from the clutches of the habit that had ruined his career, but his will always failed him. Several months ago, while he was serving time in jail for overindulgence in liquor, the black cat wandered into his cell and Hamble immediately adopted it. The cat was his only companion during the rest of his life. "Heart disease" was the verdict of the coroner's jury which investigated his death.

Calf Born Already Branded.

A calf born on the Zeb Taylor Farm, near Hearne, Texas, bears the same brand as its mother, an "X" and a bar. Although most of the cattle in this vicinity bear brands, and the birth of a calf is not at all unusual, this is the first time that a calf has come already marked. However, the outlines of the brand do not appear to extend into the hide. They are formed by tufts of hair on the side.

Gold Dust Collected with Leaves of Plant.

The leaves of the gold-spot plant, which, it is said, act as a magnet upon gold dust, are in great demand for use in the bottom of sluice boxes in California to catch the gold as it is washed down from the mountainsides with the mud and gravel brought away by water pressure. The weed, which grows in small quantities near Taft, Cal., was only recently discovered to possess the quality of attracting gold.

An indication of the demand for the plant is shown by the fact that Augustus Schwartz, a placer miner of northern Ventura County, California, went all the way to Taft, sixty-eight miles, driving over mountains and desert in a mule team and using baling wire for harness, to get some of the leaves. His wagon, also, was homemade.

Gypsy Rescues Countrymen.

Immigrant officials will be unable to bar from the country white-headed Ivan Sava and his eleven gypsy followers. They made too good a financial showing, thanks to Johann Johanoff, a gypsy from Pittsburgh, Pa. Ivan and his followers arrived at New York from the Caucasus Mountains in Russia without enough money to satisfy the inspectors, so their deportation was ordered. They sent for Johanoff, who brought $5,000 in bills and distributed them among his people, so that each would have the required amount to land here.

Find Frog with Five Legs.

John G. Huck, of Alton, while near Brighton, ten miles from Jerseyville, Ill., captured a large frog, which has five perfect legs. The fifth member projects from the frog's breast, and is similar to the other forelegs. The animal is being kept as a curiosity.

"Plants" Egg in Dirt, Watches, Gets Chicken.

Margaret Wilkins, the ten-year-old daughter of Mrs. Louise Wilkins, of St. Louis, has discovered a new way to hatch chickens. Recently she borrowed an egg from her mother and "planted" it in the ground.

In her childish way of reasoning, she wanted to see if planting eggs would not have the same effect as planting garden seeds.

It happened that she picked a fertile spot near the stable of her mother's home. The little girl watched the egg, and when she unearthed it, found she was just in time to see the little chick breaking its shell. She is proudly showing a chicken raised by the unique scheme of "planting."

Keeps Same Button Fifty Years.

Edward Tipton, eighty-six years old, of Benville, Ark., has carried a button in his trousers pocket for fifty years. He was a private in the Union army, and in a skirmish a rifle ball hit the button and glanced off. Tipton says the button saved his life. He cut it off the coat at once and has carried it since.

Clam Easy Victor Over Rat in Battle.

A desperate battle between a rat and a clam was fought on the floor of a fashionable café at Washington, D. C., owned by Thomas R. Marshall, while the patrons watched the encounter. Marshall keeps his clams in a bin at one end of the bar, and a curious rat investigated the clam bin while business was at its height.

One of the clams had opened its shell. The rat tried to nibble the membrane that protruded from the shell. The clam closed down, fastening the rat's nose between the edges of its shell. The rat pulled the clam on the floor, and for nearly ten minutes the rodent tried to rid itself of the death grip the clam had taken on its nose. Finally, witnesses killed the rat. The clam escaped, unmarked.

Sleeps in Coffin Made for Himself.

A coffin would not be considered a pleasant bed by most persons, but E. T. Hunger, former chief of police of Lincoln, Neb., seventy-six years old, has found a casket he made several years ago to be an ideal place for spending a restful night.

The home-made coffin is kept on the front porch, beneath the shade of some trees and vines, and each night, except when the extreme cold of the winter drives him inside, Hunger, his hair and whiskers whitened by nearly fourscore years, climbs into the casket and sleeps soundly.

Hunger made the coffin purely for economical reasons.

He observed, he says, that thousands of dollars are spent on persons after they are dead. He resolved that no money should be "wasted" on him, and set to work on making a coffin ready for the time he should die. The coffin is a simple affair, made of ordinary pine boards seven years ago, and cost less than $5. Hunger figures he has saved his family hundreds of dollars, which they can use and enjoy after he has gone.

Hunger started sleeping in the coffin by accident. One hot evening he lay down on the casket, to rest in the cool of the porch. He fell asleep, and when he awoke, was cold. He slipped the lid off, crawled into the box, and slept soundly the rest of the night. In this way he found that the coffin was a good place to sleep. He tried it again and again, and at last got a spring and mattress to fit into the coffin. Now he sleeps there throughout the summer.

Hunger says he expects to die in the coffin; at least, that is his prayer. He prays that some morning, when the end must come, that he will be found to have passed away, sleeping in the box. He has requested that when he is so found that he be not disturbed, but that the lid be placed on the coffin and he be carted away to the cemetery.

Will Rule "No Man's Land."

A conference, unique in history, convened in Sweden recently, when delegates from the United States and Russia, Norway, and other northern European countries, met to frame a government for the world's one country without a flag—the Spitzbergen Islands, commonly called "No Man's Land."

William K. Collier, of New York, and Fred K. Nielsen, assistant solicitor of the State department, are the American delegates.

No Man's Land, over which no nation claims sovereignty, holds valuable coal deposits. During three months of the year foreign coal miners work the rich deposits. Disputes are settled in the primitive way.

If the commissioners erect a government for this remote corner of creation, they will have accomplished a feat without a parallel.

To Try Hammer-proof Glass.

The authorities at the Royal Museum, in London, England, believe the problem of protecting the almost priceless paintings on exhibition there from the militant suffragettes has been solved in the invention of "triplex glass." When struck a hard blow with a hammer, this glass merely becomes scarred, but will not break. It is planned to place it over the masterpieces, and thus prevent slashing of the pictures.

Boy of Only Three, Reads, Writes, and Telephones.

At the age of three, Milton Prosner, of New York, knows more than the average child three times his age, reads and writes with astonishing facility, and retains in his memory facts and figures which would tax the brain of an adult.

Milton surprises even his parents with his almost uncanny knowledge. With apparent ease he can tell some of the most important events in the lives of such of the country's great men as Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. He picks out their pictures in books correctly and without a moment's hesitation. After hearing a story once, his parents say, he is able to repeat it essentially as told him weeks after first having heard it.

While other boys of Milton's age can only play with the telephone, he is able to use it. He remembers the phone numbers and addresses of numerous of his family's friends, and rarely makes a mistake in giving them.

Although he was never taught to read, he recently astonished his mother by reading out loud to her from an American history. Yet with other boys of his age Milton mixes freely, joining with them in their games.

Cat Adopts Four Chickens.

F. P. Bourg, of Raceland, La., says that he has a cat which had adopted four little chickens, two bantams, and two leghorns. The cat, according to Mrs. Bourg, takes considerable pride in caring for the little chicks, which snuggle close to her warm body at night. The cat licks them the same as she would if they were kittens.

Bees Capture City's Busy Corner.

A busy street corner in Cincinnati, Ohio, was virtually deserted for two days because a swarm of bees, driven from St. Xavier's College, where they tried to make their home, persisted in getting revenge on every person who approached.

The swarm was driven from the college by water, and at once chased the passengers and crew from a street car. From that moment until Fred Dueker and son, Irwin, trapped the bees in an old shoe box, the intersection of Sixth and Sycamore Streets was a place to be shunned.

She Copied Charred Records.

After eight years' work, Miss Irma Cox, of San Francisco, Cal., has completed the task of copying 150,000 diagrams of real-estate surveys, thereby giving complete history of original surveys of every lot in San Francisco, from 1862 to 1906.

The original papers were burned in the great fire of 1906. After several men had given them up as hopelessly lost, the girl found a way to paste the charred remains on sheets and decipher the figures. She instrusted the work to no one else on account of its delicate nature. The records, consisting of 1,000 volumes, are now valued at $100,000.

Collie Fights off One Hundred Hogs.

For two hours the faithful collie dog of W. C. Parks, a farmer, of Ottawa, Canada, fought off a half circle of 100 ravenous hogs and saved the life of Parks, who had become unconscious in a fall of eleven feet from a tree.

The cries of the dog brought aid a mile from the house just in time to rescue Parks. His dog was almost worn out. The collie had killed one hog and mortally wounded several others.

Parks had climbed the tree to saw off a limb, when he fell and his head struck the pig lot.

Meets Joking Husband with Pot of Coffee.

After his wife had complained that she heard some one walking about the yard during the night, John Vaught, of Mountain Dale, Ark., prepared to frighten her. He procured a mask, and, while she was preparing supper, went to the kitchen window and placed his face against the pane.

He expected she would cry out and rush for the bedroom, but, instead, she picked up the coffee boiler and hurled it at him. The boiling coffee and the flying glass made another man of Vaught. Both his face and his resolutions were transformed.

Pins in His Heel for Years.

William Lindauer, of Smithson, Ill., is a human pincushion, and has been for years. For several months he has felt a stinging sensation in his left heel. When the pain became intense, recently, he made an examination, and, after considerable pressing, a half dozen pins were extracted. It is believed he stepped into a package of pins when a child.

Hen Swallows Long Hatpin.

When Miss Anna Venable, of Marlton, N. J., discovered that one of her chickens had swallowed a seven-inch hatpin, accidentally dropped in the yard, she saved the hen's life by performing an operation. Although the pin point protruded from the hen's head, an inch above the right eye, Miss Venable cut open the craw, removed the pin, and sewed up the bird, which is living and is as lively as any in the pen.

Hunters Find Fierce Lion is Only Pet Dog.

Nobody around Coatesville, Pa., could agree until early one morning recently, whether it was a lion, a tiger, an elephant, or what, that escaped from a circus train on the Pennsylvania Railroad at Thorndale, and has been frightening residents of surrounding townships ever since.

One man, who said he saw it, was sure it was a lion. Everybody was sure it was ferocious. Only the bravest men ventured out at night. Hunting posses couldn't find it.

Finally the creature wandered into the yard of Vincent Stevens, of Thorndale, at midnight and howled. Promptly Stevens recognized it as his mastiff, which broke its chain the night the lion is supposed to have escaped.

This disappointed Burgess Walter Jones, S. W. Ridgeway, S. W. Thornbury, Charles Moyd, and Michael Smythe, who, clad in hunting suits and armed with guns and revolvers, charged into the Stevens back yard a moment later in an automobile, looking for lions.

Everybody agrees now that what escaped from the circus was only a wild rumor.

Mouse Stops Work in House.

While the speaker of the House, at Washington, D. C., rapped loudly for order, Congressmen left their desks and chased a mouse about the floor. "Bill" Murray, of Oklahoma, caught it and tossed it on a book Representative Mann was reading. Congressman Goodwin stepped on it and then put it in Victor Murdock's pocket. Murdock slipped the animal in Representative Murray's hair.

Lets Own Home Burn to Save Other Houses.

Aroused from his sleep by an alarm of fire at three o'clock in the morning, W. N. Kline, owner of the team of horses that hauls the fire engine in Juniata, Pa., discovered that it was his own home that was in flames. Realizing the danger of adjoining properties, he heeded only the call to duty as a fireman, rushed to his stable, harnessed his horses, and hauled the steamer to the scene.

His prompt and unselfish action did not prevent the loss of his home, but it did enable the firemen to check the flames and save the homes of his neighbors.

The Kline dwelling and two stables were burned, and three other dwellings damaged. The Hotel Admiral was threatened, and the guests fled in their night clothes.

Kline, the hero of the fire, did not carry any insurance on his household goods, but a public subscription is being taken to reward him for his services.

Here and There.

The total population of the world is now estimated at 1,700,000,000. This is based on the most recent censuses, which all civilized countries now take, with a careful estimate of the number of inhabitants of uncivilized lands. The proportion of the sexes is known for 1,038,000,000 of the world's population, the ratio being 1,000 males to 990 females.

Of the 34,000,000 people engaged in gainful occupations in the United States, 38,000 die annually either from accident or industrial illness.

The whale has the thickest skin of any living creature. Its hide in places attains a thickness of fully two feet.

The buffalo of the United States and Canada now number about 3,000.

Apple wood is the favorite material for ordinary saw handles, and some goes into so-called brier pipes.

Throughout the world there are mailed daily 110,000,000 letters and cards.

Baby's Dangerous Job.

Being a baby is a dangerous job. The estimate of the government census authorities is that we lose at least 300,000 babies every year before they have reached the age of one year—more than a third of them before they are a month old.

A member of the Government Public Health Service, in a recent address, said: "The mere business of being a baby must be classified as an extra-hazardous occupation, since the perils which ever encompass human existence are never so bitterly emphasized as in the first year of life.

"The government census figures show that in the last ten years more than 2,500,000 of the children born in this country died before reaching the age of one year. This, in terms of total population, is as if Chicago, the second city of the United States, were to be wiped out of existence every ten years, not a single life being saved."

Cow Eats Dynamite and Dies.

The stomach of a cow on the farm of George Kilpatrick, at Kerr's Creek, N. Y., was not strong enough to digest several sticks of dynamite the animal ate, and she died. Several other cows tasted the explosive, but were only slightly affected. The dynamite had been placed in sections of the pasture for use in blowing out holes for telephone poles.

Elephant Kills Keeper.

While 1,000 screaming women and children looked on, "Babe," a giant elephant in the Toledo, Ohio, zoo, at Walbridge Park, attacked its keeper, Michael Raddatz,

fifty years old, hurled him to the ground with its trunk, and then knelt upon the aged man, thrusting its tusks through his prostrate body three times.

A howdah for carrying children was being placed on the animal's back when it attacked Raddatz. When the beast started goring its trainer, frantic mothers grabbed their children and caused a panic in fleeing from the terrible scene. Raddatz died a half hour after the attack. It is probable that the elephant will be killed.

Artist Going Naked in Unknown Wilds.

In an effort to prove to the world that his familiarity with the Maine woods did not help him to any great extent in his fight with nature, Joseph Knowles, the artist caveman, who spent two months naked in the forest last summer, will again try the feat, this time in the heart of the Sierra Nevada mountains of California, where he has never been.

He proposes to enter the mountains, absolutely naked, and to remain there two months, coming out clothed sufficiently to permit him to walk the city streets.

Prohibitionist Steam Roller.

A big steam roller did more than the Prohibitionsts had been able to accomplish. It put the bar of the Farrell Hotel, at Sharon, Pa., out of commission. Also it narrowly escaped flattening out several patrons of the saloon who were taking on refreshment when the ten-ton machine was wrecked and the barroom was demolished.

The roller was approaching the hotel when the engineer lost control of it. As he shouted a warning, the machine cut through the wall and went on, taking the bar and fixtures with it and piling them up in a heap at the far end of the room, where it came to a stop. The men who were drinking barely got through the rear door in time.

Cow Hangs Itself in Tree.

After having searched nearly a day for a lost cow, Homer Ammons, of Benville, Ark., slid down a cliff near which some one had seen her, and was amazed to find the animal hanging by the head and horns in one of the large branches of an oak tree.

The top of the bluff was on a level with the treetop and the cow, feeding on the grass, had ventured too near the edge. Ammons injured his arm in sliding down the cliff, and the cow was nearly dead by the time he brought several neighbors with axes. They cut off the branch.

Cold Fatal to House Cats.

When the owners of a Pittsburgh, Pa., cold-storage house were unable to get rid of the rats in their establishment because cats could not withstand the cold of the rooms, and were paralyzed and often killed by the low temperature, they imported some cats from the polar regions. The rats were soon exterminated. The white polar cats seemed to resist any degree of cold, and their thick whiskers made them look like fierce little animals.

Pitches a Day, Fishes Three.

Roy Patterson, veteran pitcher with the Minneapolis American Association team, has a contract that stands alone in baseball documents. A clause in the contract gives Patterson the right to leave the team the night after he pitches a game. He does not have to return until the fourth day, when he is supposed to pitch again.

Patterson has a fine home at Thief River Falls, Minn., an hour's ride from Minneapolis. He spends his leisure days fishing or attending to his banking business.

Golfer Makes Hole in One.

It is not necessary for one to know the game of golf to appreciate the feat of Mike Shearman, a professional golfer, at the Sioux City, Iowa, Boat Club. To the golfer it is only necessary to state that Shearman made the ninth hole in the Sioux City links in one strike. To others it may be stated that the golfer drove a little gutta-percha ball almost two hundred yards and into a cup set level with the ground and not more than five inches in diameter. The same afternoon Shearman made two holes in two each and set a new record for the course.

Kilbane Paid $400 a Punch.

When Johnny Kilbane, champion featherweight, knocked out Benny Chavez in four minutes in Denver, Col., recently, he set the pace in money-making, for he received $2,000 for his share. The 5,000 spectators saw a man's fists earn him $500 a minute. The five wallops Kilbane handed out to knock Chavez cold were worth $400 each. One hand earned Kilbane $1,200 and the other $800. He knocked down Chavez three times with his left and twice with his right.

Had no Faith in His Hurler.

Jack Hendricks, manager of the Indianapolis American Association team, and formerly leader of the Denver Western League club, is known as one of the wits of the diamond. Hendricks has had trouble with his pitching staff all year, and one day was coaching a pitcher who was showing signs of weakening.

"Put something on the ball, old kid," he shouted from the bench, meaning that the hurler should use lots of speed and curves.

"All right, old top; what'll I put on it?" came the reply.

"Your name and address, so the finder will return the ball," retorted the disgusted manager.

Sings Pin from Her Throat.

While she was waiting for a train to take her to a hospital, where she was to undergo an operation to remove a white-headed pin from her throat, Miss Mary Austin, of Sturgis, Mich., went to choir practice. She did not intend to sing, but as her throat did not hurt, she joined with the others. The first high note dislodged the pin.

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